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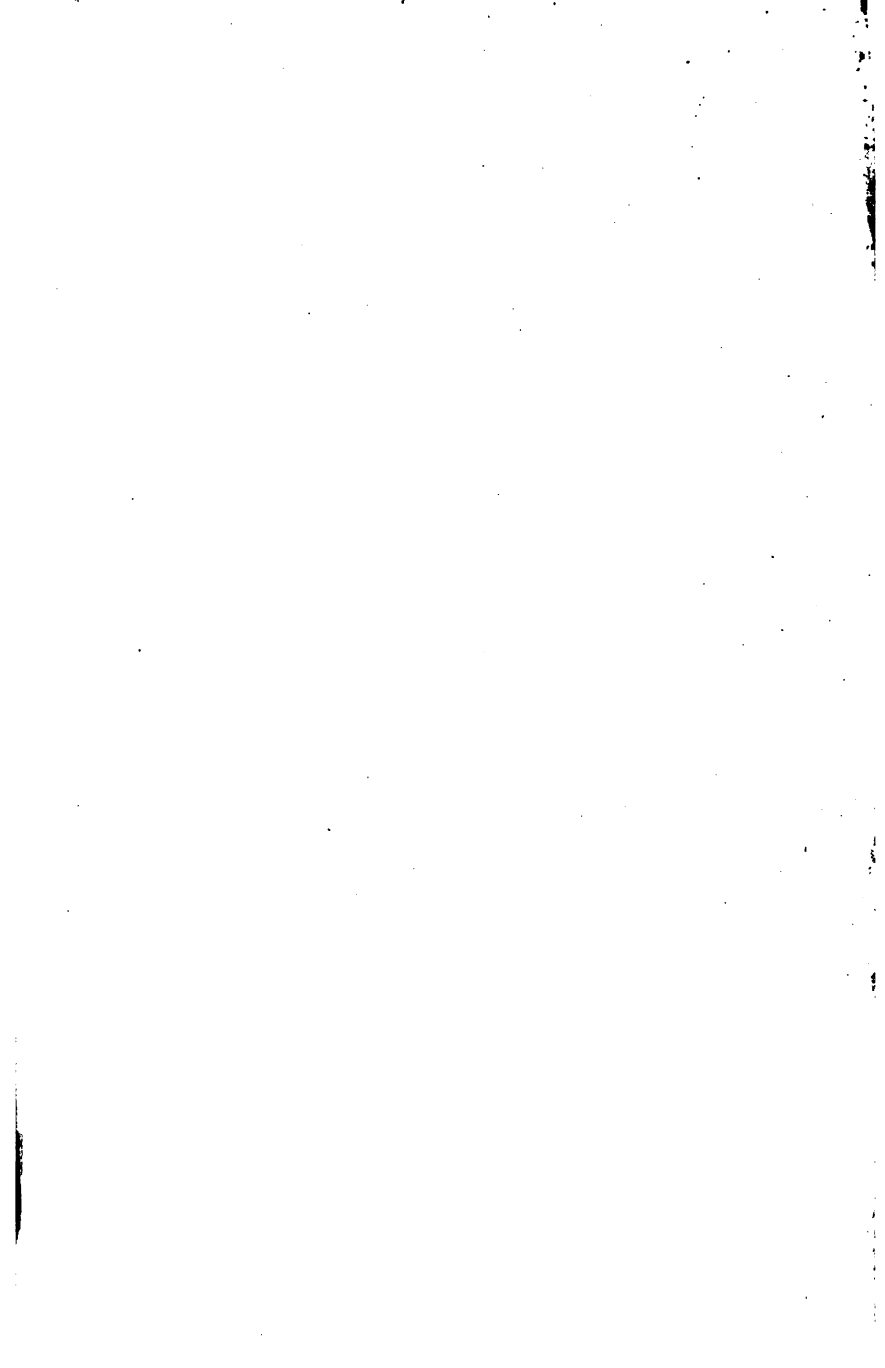
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Robert M. L. Hunter
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DUCK-SHOOTING AT HOLLAND ISLAND.

ADVENTURES AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

BY

PARKER GILLMORE

("UBIQUE"),

AUTHOR OF "PRAIRIE FARMS AND PRAIRIE FOLK," ETC.



OYSTER DREDGING IN THE CHESAPEAKE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER I.

THE LION ON NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSE—AN HARMONIOUS
EVENING—A FOOLISH-LOOKING WAITER—GOOD-BYE TO
FRIENDS IN ENGLAND—A VERDANT COCKNEY—THE UN-
TRAVELLED JOHN BULL—GAMBLING—A FOLLOWER OF
THALES—THE “ABYSSINIA”—A WASHY LOT—QUEENS-
TOWN HARBOUR—LOTTERIES—ON THE TAIL OF THE GREAT
BANK OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

ADVENTURES AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

CHAPTER I.

IN the Strand stands Northumberland House. This building, the home of the noble descendants of the gentleman who fought upon his stumps when his legs were smitten off, can be recognised by the stranger in two ways; first, for its excessive resemblance to a jail or reformatory; secondly, by the animal which stands over its *porte-cochère*. Some persons have called it a lion, but they were very ignorant of zoology; but whether it be a buffalo or hippopotamus, it will still illicit astonishment how it supports its tail. If it could wag it, what an effort it would require!—in fact, I am not at all certain that, if such an attempt

were made, the tail, being the better half, wouldn't wag the unknown beast. I have not the pleasure of knowing any of the proprietors of this extraordinary animal, or any of the residents of this sombre-looking house, although I once got a glimpse through the hall door, and another time had a look into the stable-yard; but I never return to London after a foreign sojourn, or propose leaving it for a wander abroad, that I do not visit this mansion; for why, in its vicinity is Northumberland Street, and in this street is a little hotel where I have over and over spent many happy days, and drunk a parting cup or welcome stoup with dear friends. Before I sailed for the Crimea, I stopped here; when I returned, I did the same; and invariably the friend I was most intimate with at the time made this his temporary home also—alas! how few of these are left!—but still there are one or two remaining whose friendship I value, and who frequent this snug Bohemian resort. It, too, has changed hands; but in this respect it has been for the better, for its present landlord is more to my

taste than any of his predecessors. He is most jolly-looking, and his appearance does not speak falsely; moreover, he can sing a good song, and tell a pleasant anecdote; but, better still, he knows how to have a dinner properly cooked and served—what good wine is, for he keeps it. His wife—I would not say that the grey mare is the better horse, for such would be untrue; but she is a sensible, good, kind-hearted woman, whose face looks ever bright and happy.

It was in the month of December last year that I and several friends met here to have a parting dinner, for in a day or two I sailed for America; and—who knows?—though the distance to be traversed is not great, and the dangers to be met unworthy of mentioning, still I am getting tolerably along the road of life, and there is an end to it, which some day must be reached; and not knowing when that day is to come, people, at least I, have a liking to see the last of a fellow. That was an harmonious evening. How the time flitted by! I am certain others, as well as myself, wished it had been an hyperborean night, for then there would have been a

distant ending; but, alas! it was not so, and the waiter (who, by-the-way, was the biggest-looking fool I ever saw in my life, and who, if he had adopted the stage for a profession, and could have exhibited his ordinary unassumed looks, would have put Buckstone's nose out of joint) popped in his head, and announced that breakfast was on the table. Alas! the night had fled, and a dull, grimy London Winter morning had commenced.

"Has my gun arrived yet?" I asked the landlord.

"No, it has not."

So, jumping into a cab, I rushed off to Dougall's, in James Street, who had undertaken to build me a double-barrel that would surpass any of the previous splendid guns he had supplied me with; but I had given him so little time to perform his task that now I began to dread that it would not be completed in time, and I was anxious that I should not suffer disappointment at the last moment, for such would have much destroyed the pleasure of my trip. But Mr. Dougall, with that thoughtfulness ever characteristic of him, had forwarded

the gun to Liverpool, where it was doubtless at that moment awaiting me, under the care of the Cunard agents.

A *doch-in-dorish*, several times drunk, shakes of the hand, and good-byes gone through repeatedly, left but scant enough time to catch the train at Euston, for I wished to get to Liverpool the night before the *Abyssinia* sailed, and with the usual luck of persons in a hurry, I chanced upon the slowest cab-horse that, I believe, did duty in London. Fortunately, we were not stopped for a moment by traffic, or else I should have been late; as it was, I only saved myself by the skin of my teeth, the thickness of which cuticle must be trifling, although its exact proportion I do not know.

The train that runs through from Euston Square to Liverpool the evening previous to the Saturday Cunard boat sailing is quite an institution, as far as the passengers by it are concerned. There is a remarkable foreign air about them all; even our own countrymen who are among them, with few exceptions, look as if they had cut their eye-teeth, or could be equally

at home in Arctic regions or under the Equator. One tall specimen of the Cockney struck me, for verdancy was indelibly stamped upon him ; and the amount of baggage he possessed, and was most anxious to see correctly labelled, would suggest to the uninitiated that he intended making a foreign sojourn, extending much over the term of life allotted to man. When will people learn to travel with no more than is absolutely necessary ? Until they do so they never will enjoy it—unless the adage that “one man’s meat is another’s poison” is applicable in this ; and some persons like to be bothered and bothering about the hatches being opened to get at a dress-coat or a fancy-coloured pair of kid gloves.

On this journey to Liverpool you invariably, if you have knocked about the world, make acquaintances ; for your thorough traveller is not one to mope in a corner, or by his silence try to impress people with his dignity. It is the untravelled John Bull who buttons his trousers pockets, and ferociously and suspiciously looks at all who come near him, more particularly if he be guilty of the heinous offence of trying to start

a conversation, or presumes to ask a question. This description of old gentleman is better with his bullocks and hogs, for whom he is a more fitting companion, than to be thrown into your society in the smoking cabin aboard of ship, or the public dining-room at an hotel ; for he is ever grumbling, ever standing upon his rights, expecting more than is due to him, and never giving way, even if it be for the benefit of the majority. Such characters are to be met with belonging to no other nationality ; and just to express my opinion on this class, I would say that any land that possesses them should be ashamed of her property. Well, the shrill whistle of the locomotive sounded, so long and so shrilly that it left no room for doubt in the traveller's mind that our destination was reached ; and the little coterie that had assembled and got tolerably intimate in the five or six hours we were closeted together broke up, promising to renew and improve the acquaintance that had so pleasantly commenced on board the *Abyssinia*.

The shortest description that I can give of that night is to say that the early portion of it

was devoted to Bacchus, the latter to gambling. As I never play I looked on, and to my regret saw that large sums of money were changing hands. Regret, I say, for how seldom can play be indulged in that ultimately it does not make enemies of the contestants! There was a showy, flashy individual among the passengers in the train who wished to monopolise the entire conversation; and the better to enable him to do so, he spoke with such emphasis as a teacher of elocution might be expected to use.

A run of bad luck appeared to have most persistently stuck to him, during the play in which he had become a participant. Ultimately he lost all his ready money, and became very disagreeable, and would have been, if permitted, personal; but he stopped in time, for I saw by the expression of two or three assembled round the board of green cloth that they were prepared to take him up sharply if opportunity offered. Afterwards I learned that he was some poor unappreciated actor, who believed himself possessed of unusual talent on the stage, because some small boys in the gallery had applauded him, and some country critics had writ-

ten a favourable notice of his rant, and had therefore determined to visit the United States, where he believed there was more scope for a man of his transcendent abilities.

With two exceptions, and both of these persons were Americans, I had never met an actor that did not believe himself a Kean or a Macready, whose lack of success was solely owing to professional jealousy. An acquaintance of mine, a man of great wealth, married a professional lady ; soon afterwards he said to her, "If you have any professional lady friends, invite them to our house—I for one shall be happy to see them ; but for goodness' sake don't ask the males—they think nobody can read and write but themselves."

Thus spoke a man of the world. He had seen life in all its phases, and had come to the same estimate of this class as I have. However, we have nothing further to do with the follower of Thalia; he got sick ere we had left fresh water, and his stomach was so sensitive that it never regained its equilibrium till the good ship *Abyssinia* was fast to an American wharf. Really there are many things in life which are over-

looked, for which we should thank Providence !

Well, we are forestalling ourselves. The tender, which was sadly thumped about, at last cast off her moorings, and after steering for twenty minutes against an adverse current, made fast alongside the grand and handsome ship that was destined to carry us across so many thousand miles of ocean. It is superfluous to praise the crafts of the Cunard line, for they are as perfect as can be made ; but if a choice were offered of the whole fleet in which to encounter bad weather, and a captain to take supervision of our safety during the ordeal, give me Captain Haynes and his noble vessel the *Abyssinia*.

How often I have crossed the Atlantic, I am unable to say—gales, typhoons, cyclones, and hurricanes I have been in innumerable ; but I never in my life saw a vessel behave better ; nor have I seen one more judiciously handled than I did this good craft in that journey. I feel perfectly confident when I state that if I had been in any other vessel during this voyage, out of the numbers I have crossed the Atlantic

in, I should not be here to write the narrative, but, like the passengers and crew of the *City of Boston*, be either floating about as Mother Cary's chickens, or inhabiting a land where steam and telegraphs are unnecessary.

My first impression of the *Abyssinia* was not in her favour, for she looked too high out of the water, but as soon as I had been on board half an hour I discovered my error. My wrong impression resulted from this, that the upper deck runs fore and aft with the full beam of the ship, protected at the sides by only net bulwarks; so when she ships a sea, the vessel immediately clears herself; whereas in the old-fashioned sort such surplus water had to escape through sponsons and hawseholes, a performance that required time, and until it was accomplished, was by its weight tearing the ship to pieces, and washing everything about the decks.

Although between Liverpool and Queenstown more accidents happen than occur on the broad Atlantic, we reached the latter port in good time, being favoured with fair weather. Here

several passengers joined us, the majority of whom looked a washy lot, who expected to be laid up with sea-sickness during the voyage, so shortened it by coming to the south of Ireland to embark. Queenstown Harbour I have seen look pretty when I commanded the detachment at Rocky Island. Often, early in the morning, I have looked over its wide expanse, and believed that the sun could not rise on a lovelier scene; but the Sunday morning on which we steamed into it, it was calculated to make the whole surroundings look like what one could imagine the Land of Desolation to appear. A very pretty American girl that I had made acquaintance with, was beside me as we steamed in between the forts situated on either headland that form the entrance to the bay. The distance between them is not over half a mile, still, although Carlisle fort was dimly to be seen, Camden was hidden in the wet, penetrating fog. Previous to our getting so far, I had boasted to this charming petticoat that I could show her a scene in the old country that would rival sunny New York bay. How woefully was

I disappointed! Although I attempted to describe what she should have seen, and did so in the most graphic language I could command, I knew I was not believed, and that my land had shrunk immeasurably in her estimation.

At length the mails are brought on board, the steam-whistle screeches forth tidings of departure, the capstans revolve slowly, but steadily, a slight vibration begins to be felt, a wake of foam is noticed, and we are under way, with the broad wintry Atlantic to be traversed before I place my foot again on land. From noon the breeze had commenced to freshen in fitful gusts—sure predictor of a coming gale, of which we began to feel the advance guard when we were off old Kensale Head. Still the sea was not very heavy, as the wind was from the north-west, but, nevertheless, it is surprising how it thinned our numbers. The smoking-room, which had been tolerably patronized, and where a good deal of standing on dignity and assuming airs had been evinced, now became thinned out, and it was

really amusing to observe how skilfully some one of the victims of *mal-de-mer* would beat a retreat, without disclosing to his next-door neighbour the cause of his withdrawal. Few persons like to acknowledge that they are sea-sick—it appears such a trivial, childish complaint to suffer from; but how few are the favoured ones who escape it!

About half-past ten I took a wander through the corridors off which opened the sleeping apartments, and judging from the groans and incessant calls for steward which resounded on every side, nine-tenths of the passengers were laid up. What a pity it is for the stewards that they do not get their *douceur* paid the first night at sea, instead of at the end of the voyage, for how much more liberal, nay, reckless, would a sea-sick passenger be with his purse than in two weeks afterwards, when he has returned to rude health and insatiable appetite.

By this time we were abreast of Cape Clear, and lost the benefit of its shelter from the north-western wintry blast; and didn't we catch it!

How the wind howled through the rigging, and the engine grunted, sighed, and throbbed, like some leviathan monster subjected to the tortures of the rack. At intervals would come that indescribable motion and sound caused by the screw getting out of the water, with one of the ship's heavy pitches, which are alike unpopular to passenger and seaman. By morning the weather had slightly moderated, so that after breakfast a very fair sprinkling of fellow-travellers showed up, the majority of whom, especially those that were American, commenced organizing lotteries on the distance the ship had run since leaving Queenstown, tickets for the prize being sold by public auction. During the entire voyage this amusement invariably occupied the forenoon until lunch-time, and great was the amount of merriment and fun it afforded. The proceedings were conducted in a thoroughly business manner, and as there were opposition firms of auctioneers, the chaff and repartee that was exchanged between them was sufficient, sometimes, to keep the listener in roars of laughter. However, no bad temper or angry

words ever resulted from it, which at first I feared.

Well, it blew and blew, each day appearing worse than its predecessor, and persistently right in our teeth. However, on Christmas morning the wind lulled a little, and anticipations were entertained that we should have a quiet evening to enjoy the holiday; but in this we were in error, for old Boreas had only been taking breathing time, previous to bursting out in a fit of petulance with renewed vigour. The day after Christmas was the climax. The night was dark as ink, and a wild sea was tumbling about in reckless agony, as if exerting all its power to rend in pieces whatever dared to float upon its surface. We were at this time on the tail of the great bank of Newfoundland, a place which, in my opinion, beats the world for reckless, irregular, and destructive waves. Here it ever appears to blow, and with such violence that one might imagine the storm-king had made it his head-quarters. Perhaps the experienced or scientific mariner may disagree with me, but I have often thought that there are more vessels

buried here, and hereabouts, than in any other part of the ocean; for what between fogs, gales, and icebergs, it is a piece of navigation every yard of which is fraught with danger.

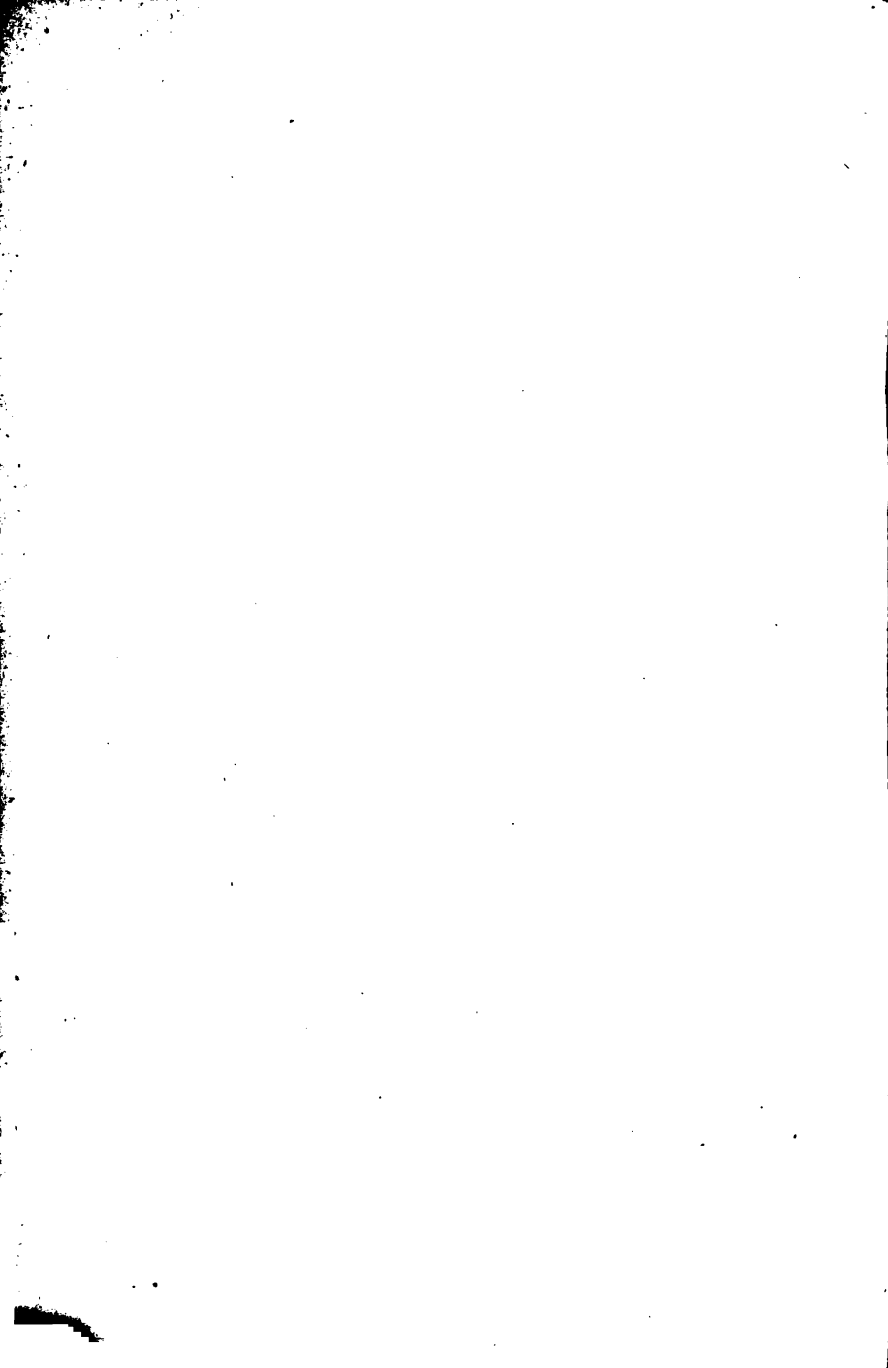
The good ship *Abyssinia* had, during the evening, shipped a great deal of water, and the captain, fearing that the deck-house, in which was the smoking-room, might be carried overboard, had induced the frequenters of it to remain between decks: thus this favourite haunt was temporarily deserted. Being desirous of witnessing the raging of the elements, I stole on deck by the main hatch, and watching my opportunity, hanging with all my concentrated strength to the man ropes, I reached the corner round which I had to pass before gaining the smoker's sanctuary. Just as I was about to make the attempt the gale appeared to become intensified in its power, and as I exposed myself to its influence I was almost carried off my feet by its violence. I really believe that if I had not hung on with almost supernatural power, I should have been lifted bodily by the raging element and thrown overboard. It was

almost as near a squeak as I ever had, and very much nearer than could be deemed pleasant. However, I gained the smoking-room, and fastening the door on the lee-side of it, stood and contemplated the extraordinary strife of the elements that was taking place. The voice of thunder now spoke, and in its volume drowned all other sounds, while a flash of lightning, intensely vivid, lit up the surrounding scene, followed by the bursting of a rain-cloud, that poured down upon us a perfect deluge; but the fall of rain brought with it good results, as its impetuous force soon pounded down the crests of the wicked waves.

The climax had at length come, and a gradual diminution in the strife of the elements became apparent. A few minutes after, the captain entered the smoking-room. He was habited in water-proofs, and had just left the bridge. Poor fellow! he was at the moment an object of pity, for the rain and wind together had almost temporarily blinded him. It was a cruel night for anyone to be out, exposed to the wintry blasts; but such are the times when the

sailor's duties are most urgent, and when a zealous and trustworthy captain is always to be found at his post.

Fancy a collision between two mammoth steamers on such a night as I have attempted to describe! No human aid or skill could avail to save them from destruction. Eleven days is an average Winter passage for such a ship as the *Abyssinia* to cross the Atlantic; on this occasion we were sixteen, and during the whole run experienced the most persistent repetition of head-winds. However, one bright morning, as the sun rose, we found ourselves off Sandy Hook; two hours more, abreast of fair and charming Staten Island, with the familiar spires and chimneys of New York looming through the smoke, something like four miles off. All were tired of the sea, none of the good ship and the kind, attentive captain.



CHAPTER II.

**MAKING LAND IN A FOG—MEANS TO AVERT DISASTERS AT SEA
—SAVING PASSENGERS FROM A STRANDED SHIP—ARRANGE-
MENTS FOR LANDING—NEW YORK HOTELS—CHANGES AND
IMPROVEMENTS—VISITING OLD ACQUAINTANCES—A PER-
SONAL PENCHANT—VISIT TO NEW JERSEY—THE HUDSON—
THE FERRY-BOAT—FLOATING PALACES—THE BAY OF NEW
YORK—EMIGRANTS FROM IRELAND AND GERMANY.**



CHAPTER II.

MAKING land at any time is a cause of anxiety to the navigator ; when it is done in a fog, it is doubly so ; but should your captain not have had an observation for several days, and a fog also to be contended with, well, then making land is truly full of danger. New York Harbour is not a very difficult place to find, still it might be easier ; but if an error in reckoning is made, and a gale is blowing from the eastward, and the craft that bears you gets ashore either on the Long Island shore on the north, or Long Branch Beach on the south, your ship must fare badly ; for a sea beats in here from the broad turbulent bosom of the Atlantic as cruel as it is powerful. We made the coast in a *thick, thick* fog—just such a one as you could feel—and our good captain had not for several

days obtained his observation at noon, so it was not surprising that he never left the bridge, nor spoke to anyone, save his officers, and then only in monosyllables, to give some order. It was evident that Captain Haynes was very anxious; and had he not just reason to be so, when we know that he had all the responsibility on his shoulders of the lives of his numerous passengers, the safety of his noble ship and valuable cargo, added to his reputation as a seaman? Under such circumstances, should not passengers exercise a little thought, and not obtrude on a Captain when engaged in the discharge of such onerous duties?

The only disagreeable person we had on board chose such a time as this to vex our chief with some frivolous complaint. If he got, which I am not certain of, a sharp answer, he deserved it. If some looker-on had made his bootmaker acquainted with his tailor, I would find the verdict "served him right." Such moments of suspense as those that occur when you are feeling your way to land, with your lead-line all the time going, produce in some

people thought and study how to remove the evil that then surrounds you. Well, it made me think, and the result was that I hit upon a plan by which it could very much be lessened, if not entirely done away with. After I have told it, I fancy hearing that some fellow has gone in to patent it, claiming it as a baby produced from his own brain. *N'importe!* At every lighthouse, and on board every steamship, I should have a powerful steam-whistle, which would sound three or four distinct notes, as dissimilar as possible, by the arrangement of which certain sentences might be expressed. Thus a lighthouse or lightship would only be required to tell you its identity—a vessel the course she was steering. From the first you would with reliable precision learn your position; by the other, vessels could with certainty avoid collision.

But while writing of modes that might be useful to avert disasters at sea, a means of saving life when a vessel has stranded in a gale has frequently occurred to me; and the more I have thought it over, the more simple its appli-

cation appears ; while the results that would accrue from its successful adoption are all that can be required. When a powerful or sudden gale catches a vessel on a lee-shore—and this is how the majority of casualties occur, from the strength of the raging elements—she is unable to crawl to windward, but continues making lee-way ; thus, unless the weather moderates, or her anchors hold, it is only a question of time when she will strike.

Well, as a matter of supposition, we will take a craft stranded upon a shingle beach, the impetuous billows from seaward fiercely beating her upon the cruel shore. The under-current from the receding breakers at the same time are struggling to rend her keel and bottom from her sides and bulwarks, while between the ship and shore seethes a caldron of surging foam, through which it would be impossible for the strongest man to swim ; for it is a chaos of conflicting currents and eddies, lashed into foam by their antagonistic courses, and entirely destitute of buoyancy from the quantity of aeration the water has received in its to and

fro course. The strongest structure framed by man's hands must in time break up under such influence, and the only chance for the crew or passengers to escape a watery grave is to gain the beach. If a line could be passed to the shore of course a cradle could be rigged, but there is the difficulty. Those on shore, when such there be, as invariably happens on our coast, cannot, from the force of the wind, get a line to the assistance of the unfortunates in danger; while those in danger cannot, from the undertow of the breakers, get a line to those who are anxious to assist them. Thus there is a chasm between them that cannot be traversed by ordinary means, so extraordinary must be adopted.

The ship that is stranded on a lee-shore, let it be remembered, has the wind beating on her, and consequently passing over her, direct to the beach—well, this power that works for the vessel's destruction must be utilized to save the lives on board. To do this, have a small balloon, that can be inflated when the necessity for its use is obvious; it can be flown from a yard-arm, or even from the deck; to it have a cord attach-

ed, pay away line till it has gone so far as to be over the shore, when the force of a gradual check placed upon the cord that connects it with the ship will from the force of the wind bring it down to ground. Even if the balloon, being composed of gas and light silk, should strike the surf before reaching land, by giving a slack line, the power of the wind upon its buoyant and high floating body will overcome that of the undertow, and ultimately carry it on shore. As to making and inflating balloons, I have not made the matter a study, so, comparatively speaking, know little; at the same time I am convinced that one of these, say three feet in diameter, would with ease carry several hundred yards of whip-cord, which in its turn would draw to or from the vessel signal halyard or other suitable cordage of sufficient strength to take or bring a hawser. A kite will also answer, but has to be differently managed.

I fear many readers will regard the last pages as prosy, but the dangers of ocean travel become annually more and more apparent to me, and if a thought or idea occur that could tend

to lessen the number of valuable lives that are annually lost among that class who have won for our dear mother-land much of her prestige, it is the duty of the possessor of it to make it known.

Arrangements for landing occupied the attention of all; faces that had never shown up during the sixteen long days were now seen upon the deck, and trunks and portmanteaus were vomited forth from the capacious maw of the main hatch. Jersey City dock ultimately is reached. It is the first day of the year, and here a universal holiday. So it is expected by all that much difficulty will be encountered before cabs can be obtained. Such was the case, and your humble servant had to pay no less than ten dollars to be transported to his hotel. The Brevoort is my favourite stopping-place in the Western metropolis, for in my opinion it is unquestionably the best managed and most comfortable establishment of New York; but unfortunately it was now full, so I had to wend my way to St. James's, also a house that is worthy of the patronage of my countrymen. Oh, the luxury of the first few hours ashore after

a tempestuous voyage, the pleasure of a bath, of a well-cooked meal, and no motion while eating; the liberty you experience in a large bed-room, in comparison with the prison-like sensations of a pent-up cabin. Shore is certainly then enjoyable, delightful; but do not for a moment think that I dislike board-of-ship life—quite the reverse; but I prefer a passage that is not all bad weather. Life, if one succession of adversities, would be very unendurable, but quite the reverse when gifted with occasional glints of sunshine.

New York I found much changed and greatly improved since I was last there, although that was only two years ago; but it is wonderful how Americans keep driving ahead, and the pace they go at.

One most marked difference is, that that portion of the city which was devoted to theatres and other places of amusements is now absorbed as business premises, the temples of Thalia and Melpomene being removed further up town. Churches, cathedrals, and palatial merchants' residences have sprung up in every direction while the beauty of their architecture, and the

magnificence of the stone employed, speak distinctly of two things, viz., that Americans are rapidly becoming more conversant with the fine arts, and that they are now aware of the importance of erecting buildings which will stand the test of time, and be the admiration of future generations, as well as of the present race of inhabitants.

Visiting old acquaintances, and hunting out friends from whom you have long been separated, are no small portions of the pleasure of revisiting an old and once familiar place. In a few days after my arrival in New York, I had seen or learnt of all those to whom in years past I was often indebted for courtesies and attentions. "Old fellow, I have often thought of you since last we parted—feared you had gone where the ivy twineth ; so glad to see you looking so well ; and where have you been, and what have you done since last we met ?"

These and many more similar questions make up the staple of the first few minutes of the first interview you have. This I had got over, also several lengthened club-dinners and late sittings,

long stories of past adventures and friends long since gone to the happy hunting land, when I commenced to think that it was time to pursue my journey to the scene of my future undertakings.

After a long and tedious sea-voyage, some days are required by the landsman before he feels that he is once more himself; for his legs, while he is on deck of a ship, acquire a peculiar description of progression, admirably suited for the deck of a rolling craft, but quite the reverse for pavements and wooden floors. His appetite also requires attention at the most unseasonable times, his thirst to be slaked at hours that on land would gain him no enviable reputation, while he is overcome by a desire to sleep when others are abroad and doing, or wishes to gad about when all respectable and good citizens have retired to their dormitories.

When at sea I have one *penchant*—few others possess it, I am certain, for if they did I should soon know it—that is, to rise at daybreak, and, habited in dressing gown and trousers rolled up to my knees, bare-footed, to seek the neighbourhood of the funnel on the upper deck,

and there, through the kindness of the ship's officers, who I always find most obliging, obtain a cup of the coffee cooked for the watch, accompanying which with a cigar, I can pass an hour most enjoyably. Soon after your advent the sun sees the necessity of rising ; and if the weather is fine, does so in such glorious majesty as is almost unknown on shore. Moreover, this is the hour for deck-washing ; a small *douceur* will amply repay the captain of the watch, and be well bestowed if it be the means of ingratiating yourself in his favour ; for, dropping off your garments, one minute under the hose will make you feel a new man ; after which you can retire, and will sleep such a two hours of rest as are known but to youth. However I had got rid of my sea-legs, and all the bad habits and inconveniences resulting from my voyage ; I had even got so far as to wish that another journey by sea was before me, when I was pressingly invited by an old friend to accompany him into the state of New Jersey, to visit a trout-hatching establishment, owned by one of his friends then on a visit to New York.

To this I consented, so we proceeded down town to find the pisciculturist, and if successful, breakfast together. Fortune smiled upon us, and we carried out to the letter that portion of the programme. At half-past ten we were to leave for his establishment. The walk from the restaurant to the ferry that crosses the Hudson river is through one of those crowded thoroughfares that run to the right from Broadway, between Fulton and Wall Street. Nothing here is remarkable to the stranger except the badness of the carriage-way, and the garbage and ashes stowed in barrels that lumber the pavement. But for all that, there is a bustle of commerce that bespeaks wealth and prosperity pervading nearly everything that surrounds you.

At length the ferry-boat is reached. It resembles a gigantic floating circus-tent, new from its constructor's hands, for it is white as snow, occasionally relieved by judiciously selected line markings, which enhance the purity of its colouring. On it there are two cabins, running lengthways of the hull, both large enough for ball-rooms, handsomely decorated, and warmed

to a pleasant temperature by steam-pipes. From the dock we glide unconsciously, stem the strong current of the Hudson so smoothly that we might almost doubt that we are in motion, if it were not for the rapidity with which we shoot past moving and stationary shipping, till the opposite shore is gained. And what a freight does this ferry-boat pour forth when she is secured in her slip—twenty or more waggons and carriages; hundreds of human beings. In no part of the world that I know are such ferry-boats to be found.

But as we traverse the broad magnificent Hudson, let us take a glance up and down the river, for it is a sight worthy of a journey to witness, and when seen, never can be forgotten. Looking to the north, from whence this noble river flows, abrupt bold hills close in the distance; and wherever water is visible, on its surface will be seen crafts of every shape and build. To the right lies upper New York, with its innumerable docks and piers, filled to repletion with ocean, river, and sound steam-vessels, all models of marine architectural skill,

and specially fitted for their various avocations. True, the Clyde has furnished the majority of the transatlantic traders; but there are also to be observed noble vessels which ply to Panama, or along the United States coast, which are worthy in every respect of their constructors. But as to the river and sound steam-vessels, those that ply between the Empire City of this giant western continent and Albany, or possibly Boston, what can be said to exaggerate their magnificence and beauty? "Floating palaces," they have been called; but there are many palaces in the old world, dingy, and tumble-down, representing past glories, that for magnificence have no right to be classed with these boats. Then to the northward, on the Jersey shores, float in the stream, or in docks, fleets of schooners that wander far into foreign waters, or brave the Winter gales upon their own rugged shores. But this is not all—listen, and the ear will hear the dull and distant incessant clink of hammers. Let the eye endeavour to trace from whence the sound comes, and immense dockyards and ship-building sheds will be discovered, where many

a giant keel is being laid, and the skeleton of numerous leviathan ships wait but for completion, to enable them to encounter Arctic gales or tropical tornadoes.

From the north gaze to the south. The calm bay of New York opens before you, land-locked on every side, and capable of affording shelter to the fleets of the world. On the right is Staten Island, the Isle of Wight of America, closely dotted over with picturesque villas, from its summit to the water's edge, the intervening spaces covered with verdant and well-laid out timber. But on the placid bosom of the bay float hundreds of large vessels; from their peak flies the flag of every nationality; and amongst them impatiently hurry diminutive tow-boats, ever snorting, whistling, and moving about, as if their errand was one of life and death.

Among these distant vessels, the avocations of many, from peculiar characteristic marks, are to be distinguished. That high, lumbering, old-fashioned-looking craft is loaded with German emigrants. Poor creatures!—truly

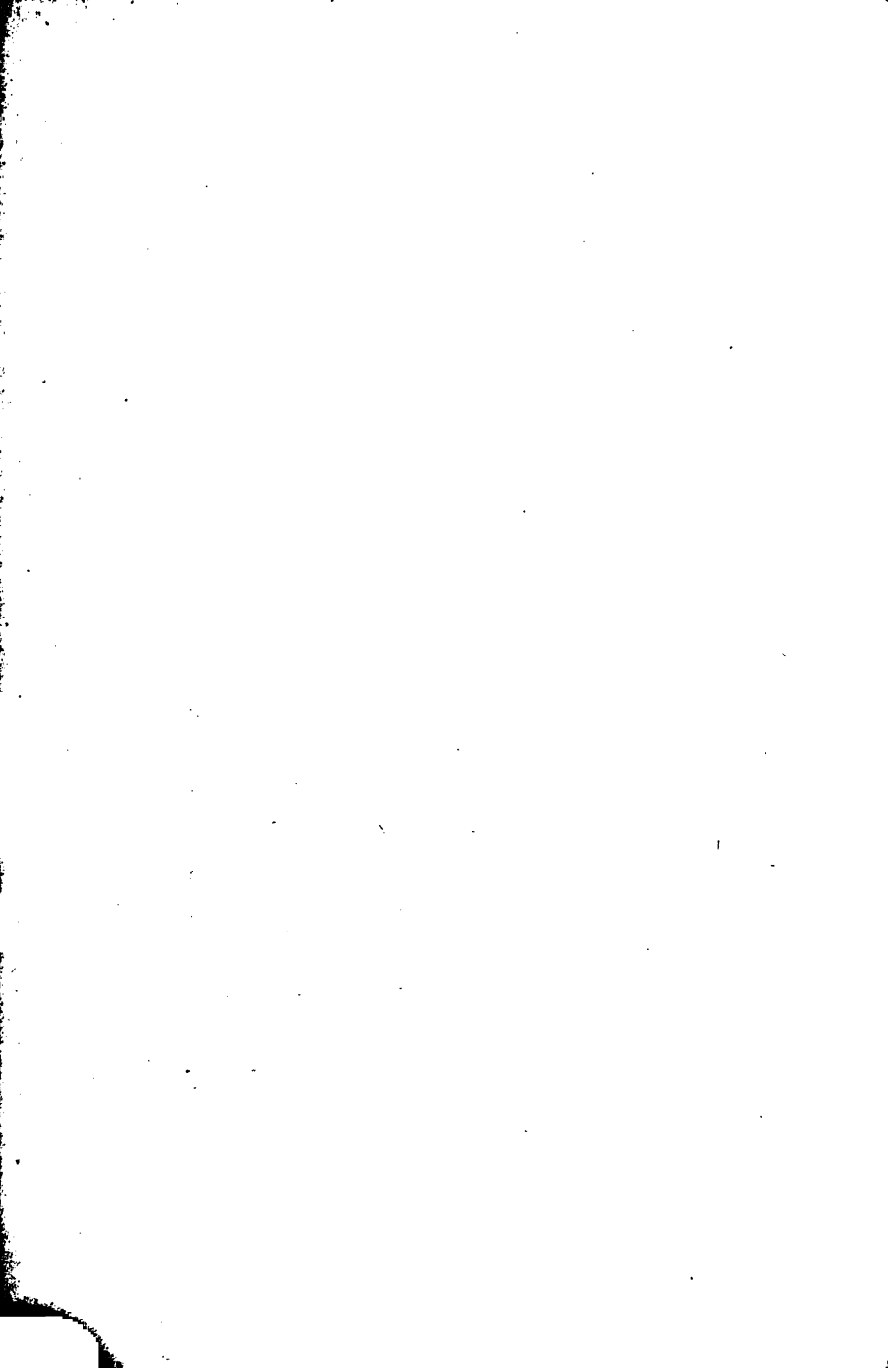
are most of them to be pitied when they place their feet on shore, for they are badly clad and without means or friends; but should we see them ten years hence, it would be seated under their own verandah, sheltered from the sun's rays by a prolific grape-vine, their good and faithful Frau actively engaged in domestic pursuits, with peace and plenty shining upon all that surrounds them; and better than all, that all their own. But near by the craft that brought safely across the Atlantic the children of the Fatherland, lies a modern-built vessel, also loaded with people seeking a new home. In every street and pot-house they will find new friends—if short of funds, what does that matter?—there are Micks and Pats, Murphies and O'Shanes, in New York, who are able and willing to supply their wants, provided they curse the Government and institutions of the old land. Look forward ten years to their future. They will then be found pot-house politicians, disorderly anti-law-abiding citizens, always ready to engage in riot and acts of insubordination—I would hope not with

the idea of purloining the wealth amassed by the care and industry of the frugal and industrious.

These pictures which I have attempted to sketch do not apply to all the new arrivals from Germany and Ireland, but my experience tells me that it does to the majority.

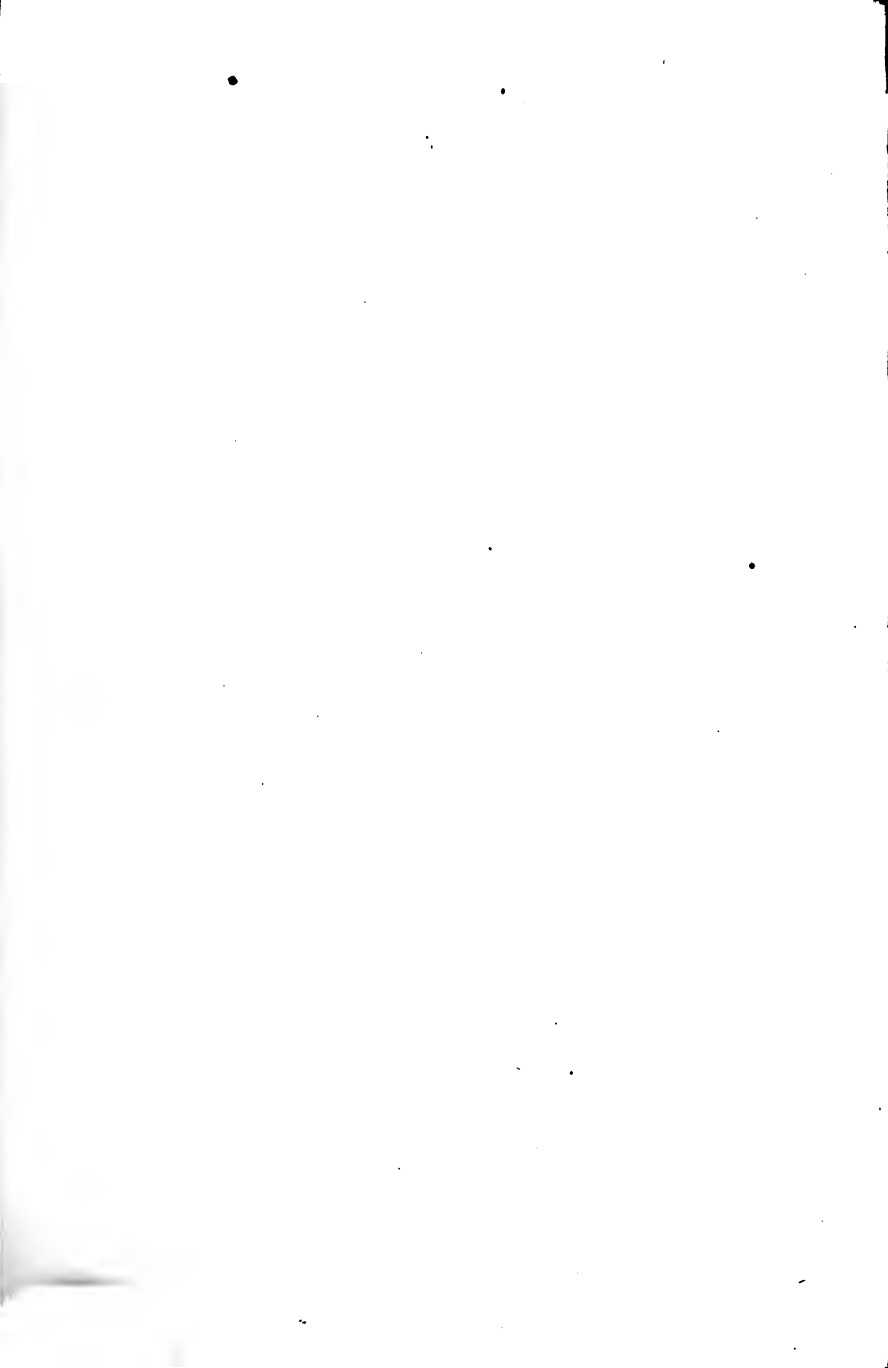
Home-rule for Ireland is at present being agitated in the mother-land. What a pity it is that the desire of the persons who propose it cannot be carried out! The objectionables would soon be got rid of; for the first thing they would do would be to copy the example set them by the well-known Kilkenny cats.

On religions I will not attempt to say a word—let every man worship his God as he likes. With whatever he professes or practises I will not interfere, nor do I wish any interference with myself; but the Protestant population of the North of Ireland are a people of whom any nationality might be proud—the same I cannot say for the Roman Catholics of the Emerald Island.



CHAPTER III.

JERSEY CITY—SCENERY OF NEW JERSEY—OBSERVATIONS ON
SPORT—WASTE LANDS—OLD RACE-COURSE OF SECAUCUS
—A VIRGINIAN BREAKFAST—INTERNATIONAL RACES—
ENGLISH AND AMERICAN HORSES—AN UNATTRACTIVE
POPULATION—FIGHTS—ROUGHS OF THE OLD AND NEW
WORLD—DUTCH SETTLEMENTS—A DISCOVERY—LA BELLE
AMÉRICAINNE—PISCICULTURE.



CHAPTER III.

JERSEY CITY is at length gained, and from the ferry-boat we enter the cars (railway). "All aboard" is sung out by the conductor (guard); the engine sings out in mellow bass-notes a warning that it is about to start, and in a moment afterwards we are *en route*, threading our way through streets crowded with foot-passengers, conveyances, huxsters' stalls, and boardings covered in every spare corner with flaming show-bills or quack advertisements. At length the residences get less numerous, and for miles we thread streets only marked out by a few scattered houses, often only by side-walks. All these houses are in themselves clean and comfortable-looking; but, as a rule, there is a wonderful want of

regularity and order in their outside arrangements. This I never could understand ; more especially when I knew that few of these dwellings belonged to Americans, but to persons of European birth. The scenery in this portion of New Jersey, although within only a few miles of New York, is so peculiarly American that, if a person who was acquainted with its peculiarities were transported thousands of miles in his sleep, and dropped among it, he would not hesitate for a moment in deciding on what continent he was.

But there are still some people in the world, I believe, who have not been in the grand country that forms the Western boundary of the Atlantic, and for these let me attempt to describe the peculiar features that give an individuality to the scene. Wide-spreading savannahs, covered with dense luxuriant vegetation, intersected by tidal water-courses, are margined in the distance by extensive sheets of open water. Occasionally, and not unfrequently, from the level ground rise eccentric-shaped and often lofty islands of every outline and magni-

tude, whose surface is covered from base to apex with every variety of indigenous timber. Many of these islands have been selected as sites for villas ; and if picturesqueness of appearance is the *sine qua non* for such a residence, they are admirably suited for the purpose.

But, alas ! there is a fearful drawback, which too few new-comers think of, or if they do, disregard, believing that their constitutions are so strong that what may affect the native will not touch them—viz., malaria.

The sportsman cannot ride through this part of the new world without feelings of pleasure, for everything that Nature has in her power appears here to be combined to make it a perfect sanctuary for game. To the devotees of the gun, the beds of the water-courses in imagination can be made to swarm with fish, and the surface with wild-fowl, the savannah with snipe, curlew, and plover—the well-wooded islands with partridge, grouse, or woodcock. Although I am told that it is not necessary to look many years into the past for a time when splendid sport could here be enjoyed, at

the present time I fear that the most industrious and indefatigable sportsman would not receive sufficient remuneration for a day's tramp over the boggy, uncertain surface.

Although the locality I am speaking of is within a few miles of New York, yet there are thousands on thousands of acres lying waste; for, with strong winds from oceanwards, they are all subject to overflow. Some persons may think this a trifle, and that nothing has to be done to reclaim the land but build banks—in fact, accept the Dutch as a model, and follow the example they have set in Holland. If this were possible, it would have been done long ago; the Americans being as sharp as any race in the world, and perhaps the very sharpest to discover an adequate means to cope with an emergency. Banking has been tried and found a failure—and why? Because an animal, peculiar to their continent, will not give up its vile habit of burrowing. No, reclaimers of land cannot exterminate or get rid of the musk-rats; and when these animals break the surface of the embankment, the waves in the first high tide

undersap the earthworks, and in a wonderfully short time the whole structure is a ruin.

Two or three years since, a public company was formed to utilize these vast meadows. A really clever engineer had thought of making the weather-face of the embankments of vast plates of cast iron, sunk into the surface two or more feet. Near Newark was selected for commencing operations. But although the prospect promised exceedingly well, it did not turn out as advantageous as anticipated; for the musk-rats would not be denied their right of road, and what they could not go over or through, they went under, and the water followed in their tracks, and so undermined the weighty structure of iron, that it fell by its own gravity. But the time, doubtless, will come when the habits of musk-rats will be better understood, and man's ingenuity will discover a means to exterminate the pests, or underplot their machinations, and then these vast meadows will produce the most valuable crops, for their soil is the result of the collection of vegetable *débris* for years.

Before leaving this Savannah-land, I look out eagerly with the hope of discovering the old racecourse of Secaucus; for not many years back I spent many a pleasant hour witnessing the horse-racing that was held there twice each year. But its glory has now departed, and the crowds who in times gone by made it a favourite resort, now direct their steps to Long Branch or Jerome Park.

The most of us know what a wonderful and grand affair a thorough Scotch breakfast is. Well, a Virginian one is not unlike it, only "a little more so," and old Colonel Daniels, of Richmond, Virginia,—as well known on the American turf as the Admiral is upon the English,—during the late war between the North and South, brought his stud of horses to Secaucus, and dispensed his hospitality to all comers who were of the right sort. What crowds can I remember there of a fine morning, seeing the youngsters get their gallops! What a hungry crowd would sit down to breakfast, and how corn-dodgers, hoe-cakes, and buck-wheat cakes would disappear! what stories, and pedigrees, and bets would echo from every corner of the board!

and what a queer collection of people one found assembled around him ! Near the head of the table possibly a lord or two, a minister of legation, or two or three diplomatic attachés ; further down a number of military men of both nationalities, interspersed among merchants, bankers, newspaper proprietors, gamblers, and ci-devant prize-fighters. Such was the composition of this heterogeneous crowd.

Although Secaucus is now, comparatively speaking, deserted, I am glad to learn that the old Colonel has been more than usually successful in his racing transactions of last season, for he is owner of the wonderful three-year-old, Harry Bassett, which has beaten all opponents, and is supposed to be the very best thoroughbred ever produced in America. I am certain that there are numbers of the admirers of the race-horse who would like, as well as myself, to see an international contest between two of the best animals that could be procured on either side of the Atlantic. However, the voyage is regarded by so many as a serious and insurmountable drawback, that I fear it will be many

years before we have our desire gratified. In my opinion a horse can be carried from Liverpool to New York without suffering any greater injury than that which must necessarily result from want of exercise. As I have superintended the shipping of many hundreds of horses, I should know something of what I am speaking, and so repeat that the voyage is not the drawback, but the change of food, air, scene, which necessarily occurs when the sea-journey is finished. The question has often been asked me, which do I believe to be the faster? Well, I should back my own countryman, provided the distance was not too long; *id est*, the American thoroughbred is the better stayer, but less fleet.

Once across the Savannah, the line of railroad runs through a densely-populated neighbourhood, abounding in machine-shops, manufactories, and taverns, interspersed with pretty, frequently handsome villas, which we obtain a good opportunity to admire, as the locomotive, on account of the traffic which surrounds it, is only permitted to go half-speed, while the stoker monotonously pulls the string of the tin-pot

bell hung over the engine, as if any other warning was wanting to clear the track than the snorting of the giant steam-horse.

The lower classes of people that inhabit these towns are not an attractive-looking population. They have a great deal of the Bowery stamp about them; fur or glazed caps on their heads, bad cigars in their mouths, hands shoved well down into their trousers' pockets, while the nether garments themselves are tucked into the tops of heavy cow-hide boots, which look as if intended as much to do service in a free fight as to keep the owner's feet from the mud. How these pot-house and corner loafers manage to make a livelihood is to me a wonder. Still they always appear to be well supplied with the needful, for there seems to be no limit to their consumption of tobacco and liquor.

If there is one thing I abominate more than another, it is to see human beings fight, but once or twice I have been compelled to witness disturbances among this class of people, and the sight was sickening in the extreme, for the object always appears to be to get the antagonist

down, and, when in this helpless position, to maim or disable him in every possible manner. I once asked a rough why they fought so, and not in a fair, stand-up way. The answer was, "We don't fight for play, we fight to whip."

However, I must not be too hard on these people, for I have seen just as bad, if not worse, in the manufacturing parts of Lancashire, say the vicinity of Oldham, where they are not satisfied to pull their antagonist down, and abuse him when prostrate, but kick him on the head or stomach with those uncivilized-looking pedal appendages—clogs. If you find bad on one side of the Atlantic, you are certain to find its counterpart on the other.

After leaving New York about twenty miles behind, I became conscious that we were ascending a very steep grade, which I was told formed a kind of table-land half-way between New York and Philadelphia, and which formed a water-shed for numerous rivers running in all directions. A peculiarity among these is, that those flowing to the south and east possess trout, those to the north and west only baser

fish. On gaining the plateau the country improved very much in a farming point of view, for cultivation appeared to be carried on in a much more systematic manner. Being struck by this, I inquired the reason, and found that the original settlers on the ridge were Dutch, and that the homesteads (farms) were still in the hands of their descendants. If, in passing through any portion of the United States, you remark a neighbourhood looking more than usually prosperous, there is no necessity to ask the cause, but accept my word for it, persons of Dutch descent are its inhabitants.

The Dutch are a most provident people, and here you will see abundant evidence of it, for however old their homestead may be, choice portions of the original forest will be found neatly enclosed, as a guarantee against want of firing, while small plantations of different ages are placed in all such angles and corners as can best be spared from the plough.

At length we reached the station. It is a rather pretty Gothic cottage, built of wood, with a well sheltered porch. On it are assem-

bled all the wealth and fashion of the neighbourhood, anxious to see and be seen, get newspapers, and hear the latest scandal and gossip from York. With natural curiosity I take a good stare at the population, who return it with interest. I discover that puffs, panniers, and high-heeled boots have already got here. In front of me I observe a blond chignon, such a one as can frequently be seen in Regent Street about five. The possessor of it has a good figure, and is well set on her legs, but, to my taste, a little low in flesh—scraggy women I abominate. To get a glimpse of the unknown's face, I pretend to be desperately anxious about some baggage, and of course look for it in the direction of the object of attraction. The time spent in my little artifice was not wasted, for she was really worth looking at, only a little too pale to please me. All would acknowledge, too, that she had the appearance of being uncommonly well bred. But, if I mistake not—on a second glance, it must be so—I recognize a lady I had frequently seen at the Grand Hotel in Paris during the past Autumn. This discovery made

me bolder, and to become thoroughly certain that I was correct, I took another look. Those large, full, brown eyes and dark, pencilled eyebrows, those chiseled features and full red lips, could not be matched; and while I thought so, her glance caught mine, and in a moment I saw that I was recognized, and that my surmises were correct. What would a certain Brevet-Major, my companion in my last visit to the capital of France, have given to be with me now, for never was a poor fellow so desperately hit as he was—and before me stood the cause of his misery. The first quiet day that I have I will write to him in India, and tell him where the object of his adoration lives. But really, after all, this world is so small that, go where you will, you are ever treading upon the heels of some person you have met with before.

But before leaving the fair American, I would say a few words of my previous meeting with her. Major B—— and myself had gone over to Paris for a couple of weeks, to see what it looked like after the siege. This motive had prompted numbers of persons to do the same,

for the hotel at which we put up was so patronised that, if I had not telegraphed for rooms at least a week before our arrival, we should not have succeeded in obtaining accommodation. We dined at the *table-d'hôte* the first day of our visit. Close by sat *la belle Américaine*; she was beautifully dressed, looked charming and piquant, and was attended by a vulgar old fellow, whose degree of relationship to her we could not discover. However, an opportunity occurred for an introduction, which the Major took advantage of, and soon after they were on the most chatty terms.

Now at the hotel there was a remarkably pretty chambermaid; my friend and she had already chaffed each other; so one night after dinner, when I fear he had imbibed more wine than his head could bear and judiciously control, he was returning to his room, The light in the passage had become very low, so that it was impossible to see objects distinctly. A female rustled past him, and went into the next room to his. In a moment he concluded that it was the chambermaid entering his apartment,

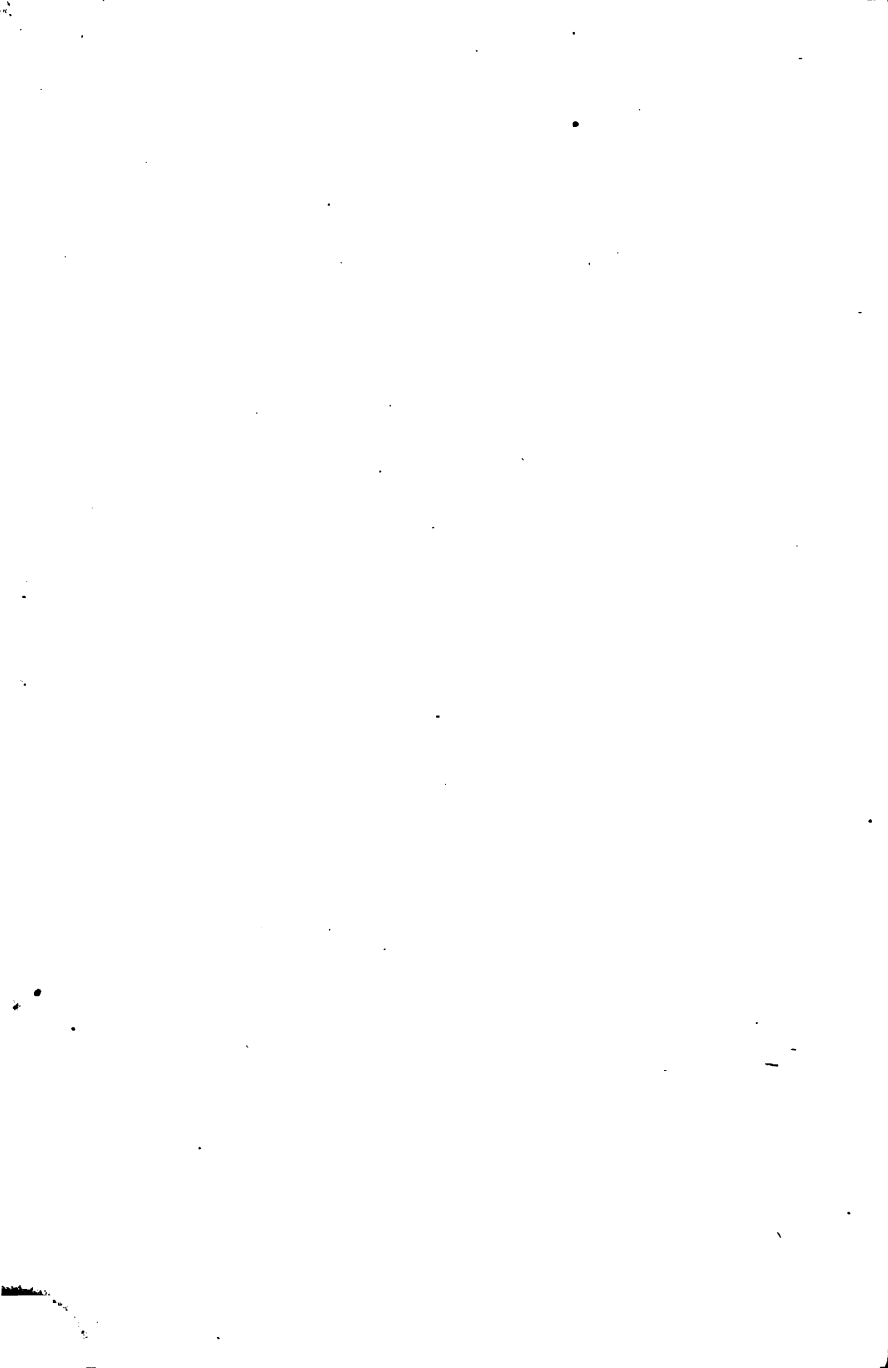
and foolishly determining to have a kiss from her, he followed her into it. Soon he got his arm round the waist of the object of his pursuit, and tried hard to place his lips upon her cheek ; but slap after slap he got on the side of his head for his impudence ; and finding that he was beaten, he permitted the fair one, who was vowing vengeance, to escape from his hold. In a moment she struck a match, and, to his horror and dismay, the gallant Major discovered the lady to be the fair American. He tried to stammer out an excuse, lamentably failed, and rushed from the room covered with confusion. Although he wrote sundry letters of apology for his conduct, she never again spoke to him, and soon after disappeared. Paris no longer had attractions for the gallant son of Mars, and until the day when he embarked at Southampton he bewailed his stupid conduct, which had severed him from, as he said, the only woman he had ever loved.

And here she was in New Jersey, and the common-looking old man I found to be her uncle, immensely wealthy (did you ever know a person

who had amassed a fortune by industry otherwise?), and she the heir to all he possesses. The lapse of time might cause her to forgive Jack, particularly if she knew that his treatment of her really was the result of a mistake. If I had time and opportunity I would plead his cause for him ; but this was improbable.

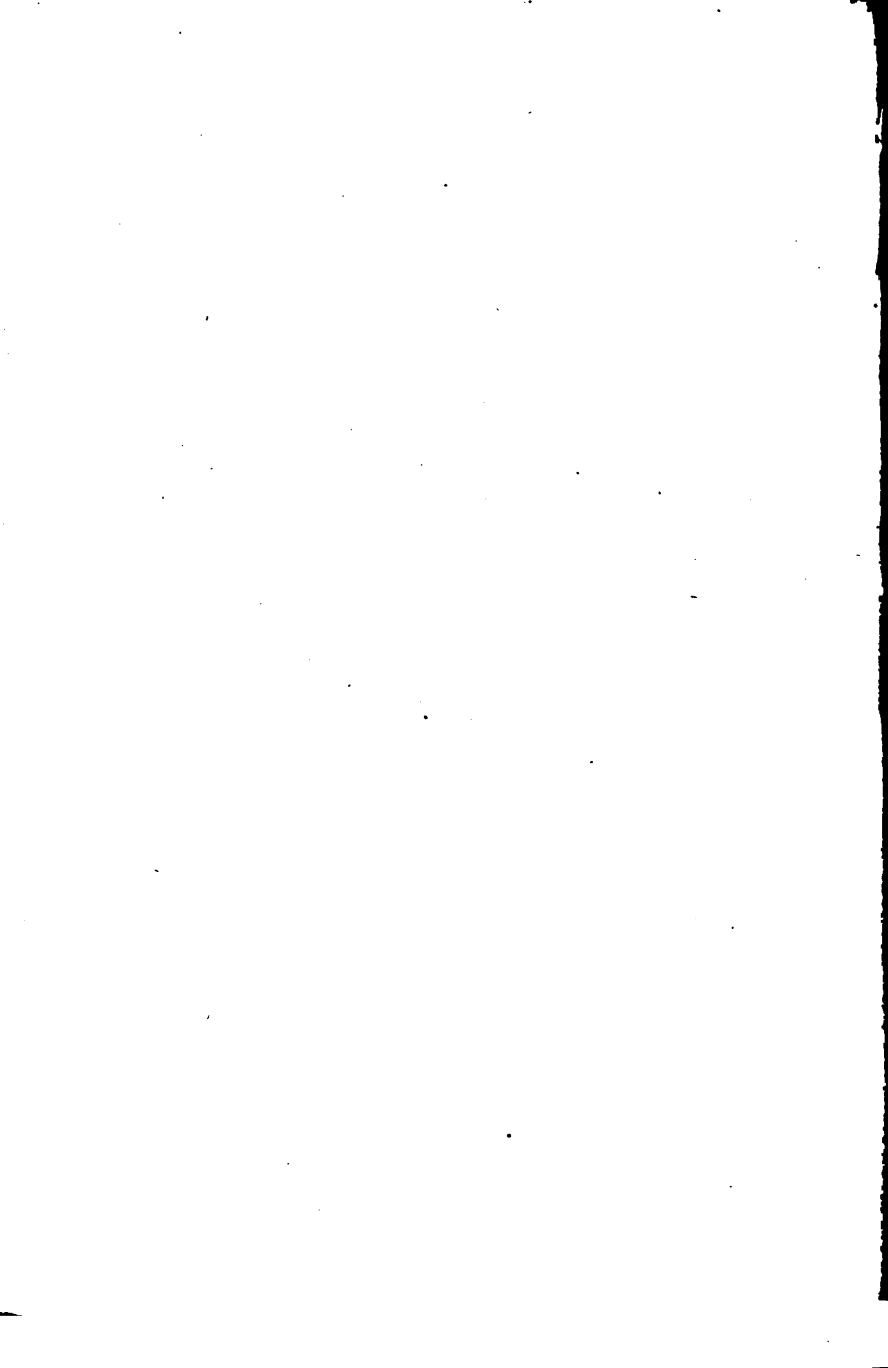
At length we reached the fish-hatching establishment of my new acquaintance, and I found it well worth a visit ; an inspection of it amply repaid me for the distance I had travelled to see it. It was situated within a quarter of a mile of a fine, picturesque, rapid river, about the size of the Thames at Pangbourne ; but it was not from this stream that the supply of water requisite for hatching purposes was obtained, but from an immense spring which bubbled up thousands of gallons of water per hour. In the hatching-house immense quantities of preg-nated ova were shown, and four large ponds fairly swarmed with fish. With a rod and fly I soon captured one of these beauties, and, although it was evident that the trout was not in season, yet its colouring was superb, and the

depth of its frame spoke plainly what a powerful fish it would be when in condition. Here I spent the remainder of the day, and my host did all in his power to make a most enjoyable visit even pleasanter; and when I left next day he presented me with five hundred pregnated ova, which I lost no time in forwarding to our Zoological Society, where they arrived in due course of time, through the kindness of the Cunard Company's employés.



CHAPTER IV.

A PLEASANT FELLOW-PASSENGER—THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB—
AN INVITATION TO DINNER—REPRESENTATIVE MEN—INNO-
VATIONS OF FASHION—TOASTS AND SPEECHES—A CELE-
BRATED TELEGRAPH STOCKHOLDER—AN AMERICAN RAIL-
WAY KING—THE LATE HORACE GREELEY—SCHUYLKILL
RIVER—AUDUBON AND WILSON—BALTIMORE—CLUBS IN
THE UNITED STATES—A RESORT FOR NATURALISTS.



CHAPTER IV.

AMONGST the numerous passengers who crossed in the *Abyssinia* with me was one who, although the architect of his own fortune, had risen to the most eminent position among politicians of his country. I sat next him at table, and the acquaintance thus engendered soon became an intimacy, for a more pleasant and gentlemanly companion, or one possessed of a greater fund of general knowledge, it has never been my luck to encounter. A day or two after my arrival in New York, I received a polite note from the secretary of the — Club, informing me that I had been made an honorary member of that establishment for the period of my stay. This courteous attention,

I found upon inquiry, was due to my fellow-traveller.

This Club, which is essentially political, was commenced during the late war by those uncompromising adherents to Abraham Lincoln's administration, who were determined to sacrifice not only property, but life, to keep the Union undivided—in fact, they were the ultra-Radical party.

Since pleasanter and less troublesome times have set in, and the blast of the trumpet and the beat of the drum have ceased to reverberate over the land, the bitterness of political antagonism has ceased, and doubtless a democrat may now be found a member of this Club. It is an excellently-conducted institution, the *cuisine* and wine-cellar are well taken care of, and the billiard-rooms, reading-room, and theatre are all charming apartments, worthy of representing the class of people who patronize it. The building originally was erected for a private dwelling-house by Mr. Jerome, at one period one of the wealthiest stock-brokers in the metropolis of the West;

but circumstances caused him never to occupy it, and in due course of time it became what it now is.

An invitation to dinner from my kind acquaintance, Mr. —, the passenger who sat at table near me during the voyage, caused me to find myself at the — Club, at 7 P.M. On arrival I found my host, who introduced me to several strangers, while among the guests were many of our late passengers.

An American gentleman, who had not as yet visited Europe, took me under his special charge, and pointed out the celebrities in the room, telling me what were the different qualities to which they attributed their success — never failing to inform me, at the end of each description, how many hundreds of thousands of dollars each was supposed to be worth. All of them, my new friend impressed upon me, were representative men. What a number of this class America must possess, if all are such that are exhibited to you under that name !

But after all the term is not misapplied ; and

they are a type of society which the trans-Atlantic Republic has as much right to be proud of, as England has of her old families, her squires, yeomen, or sailors. These representative men are those to whom America owes much of her present greatness, and the giant steps of progress she is making. Generally they are of obscure origin; but through force of character, indomitable perseverance, wonderful powers of adapting themselves to circumstances, mechanical ingenuity of a high order, or great inventive powers, they have risen to the high position they occupy. Then their enterprise is unbounded; not satisfied with having made a fortune, they continue in business, and seldom take off its harness till they are called to another world. Thus their money is ever in circulation, and the stagnation that results from locked-up capital does not occur.

Contrary to the custom in old times in America—well, say twenty years back—late dinners and dress-coats are becoming fashionable among our cousins—if I predict not wrongly, will be ultimately overdone by them, for they are a won-

derful people for going in for out-rivalling their neighbours. Well, we had a capital dinner and excellent wines; the waiters knew their duties, and did them, and when these sable worthies were dismissed to the lower regions, speechifying commenced.

Out of compliment to the Englishmen present, our Queen's name was coupled with the President's in a very neat and appropriate way, and hopes were expressed that the good feeling existing between their respective governments might increase annually, till we were tied by such bonds of friendship that the cause of each became common to both. Then came other and more business-like harangues, the chief of which was the proposal of our host's health, by a celebrated telegraph stock-holder, inventor, and manager. He told us to what perfection he had brought the working of the various lines under his control; how he had discovered that two messages could be sent from different ends of a wire at the same time, and that he would be delighted to show us all and everything, if we would honour him with a

visit; but, in rather "bad form," he concluded by telling us how he had taken our kind and gentlemanly host by the hand when he was comparatively a poor man, and that to him, his illustrious self, was owing our entertainer's present position.

The next person to speak was a large railway contractor and speculator—a kind of Jim Fisk, of Erie reputation, in a small way, without the Josephine proclivities; he rattled along famously, said a lot of pert things and to the point, was very jolly, and, after all the representative men had had their say, adjourned with us to the billiard-rooms, where a very late night was made, and much brandy and soda, with tobacco, was destroyed. A friend informed me that he had never known this railroad king do the like before, for that his good wife did not sanction such bacchanalian orgies. Thus a secret leaked out that the grey mare was the better horse, even when running in harness with a mate who employed and ruled thousands of his sex. Well, I saw the lady afterwards—for I was desirous of seeing what a person gifted with such powers

of home-government was like—and all I can say is, that she was a thorough good type, well set-up, lady-like, and with as pretty a foot and ankle as the most fastidious taste could fancy.

Fifteen we sat down to that dinner. Talk of hospitality, when I tell you that next morning I found seven dinners booked, with no end of lunches and suppers, neither of which could I have politely refused! Ay, you Americans are a kindly race, take you the right way; but, like John Bull, you do not like your fur rubbed the reverse direction.

I had been passing a subsequent evening in the billiard-room of this club, when, being tired of play, I adjourned to the reading-room, to have a look at the English periodicals before going to rest. Sitting at one of the tables was a stout, elderly man, with a profusion of white hair hanging over his coat-collar; in front of him were a number of printer's slips, over which he was most intently poring; while with the rapid pen of one experienced in the business, he frequently stopped to correct an error, or transpose a sentence. This remarkable man I

had seen frequently before, and to see him once was to remember him for ever, for his was no ordinary countenance, but one that caused the person who looked upon him to see, supposing he was a judge of character, that beneath that massive brow and plain, although not unpleasant face, there were talents and abilities that were bound to place him in positions of eminence among his fellow-men. Age had caused him to stoop a little, still he was not an old man for his years, which I should suppose must be quite sixty-five. His life was but a counterpart of many of the great men this giant land has produced. Born comparatively poor, if it had been the object of his ambition now, he might have been wealthy; but I do not think he was so, although he possessed an influence and a voice second in importance to that of none, if we except the President's.

At one time Mr Greeley (for such is the name of the person I have been attempting to describe) was noted for the eccentricity of his costume, and the carelessness of his attire. His enemies said that this was assumed; whether

or not, he seemed latterly to pay much more attention to his costume. Literary men I have ever found careless about dress—sometimes so much so that this neglect amounted to being objectionable to their associates. However, I think this is induced by their minds being constantly in active operation studying out plots or plans, or ravelling the mysteries of some new theory that their fertile brain has fabricated.

During the war, Mr. Horace Greeley was a staunch and devoted supporter of the constitutional Government, and he would have stood to that cause till the end, whether success or the reverse had been the issue. His reasons were, I believe, that he considered, if the Union was once severed, the example would be followed by other states, till untimately the continent of North America would be cut up into as many petty states as Europe was within our recollection. No man possessed more bitter enemies than Mr. Greeley, yet his best haters I never heard say that he had ever made money out of his power or position—in fact, a more honest, upright man it would have been difficult to find.

With all Mr. Greeley's immense talents, in some respects he was so simple as almost to be childlike—any impostor telling him a story of misfortune would obtain his sympathy, and a share of his purse. I have further been informed that the wildest and most visionary speculations had a fatal attraction for him. He was unquestionably a great man, and, I sincerely believe, a good one; yet, like many who were his equals, possibly his superiors, such as Clay and Webster, he had no more chance of becoming President of the United States than I have of becoming King of Timbuctoo.

In two weeks I had had sufficient of New York, for the weather was simply abominable, and I longed to get down to more sunny climes, have some shooting, and test my late purchase of Mr. Dougall. The journey from the metropolis to Baltimore takes about eight or nine hours, but it is an enjoyable ride, for it is through a lovely rich agricultural country, possibly more highly cultivated than any other equal extent of land in the United States. On this line of railroad I noticed improvements—the

train now goes round Philadelphia, and the necessity of changing carriages is done away with. This used previously to be a great nuisance, particularly as the respective stations were many miles apart.

But busy Philadelphia and its smoky workshops are soon passed, and the broad, smiling and beautiful Schuylkill River comes in sight—not now rippling in the evening sunlight, but dazzlingly beautiful in a coat of ice, on which thousands of persons are skating, in all the enjoyment of this most delightful of Winter pleasures. What crowds of children, both boys and girls, rush recklessly to and fro over its surface, while their merry laughs and shouts tell how intense is their enjoyment! This river I never view without feelings of pleasure, for its banks were a choice wandering place of two of my greatest favourites—viz., Audubon and Wilson, the ornithologists. Strange that these two great men, at a time when America was, comparatively speaking, in her infancy, should have selected the same spot to carry on their researches; and yet they were of differ-

ent nationalities, different characters, different tastes, only agreeing on one point, and that an intense love and admiration for the inferior animal creation. I have been told that Audubon and Wilson greatly disliked each other, and that they avoided coming in contact whenever it was possible. That I can believe, for the one was an ultra-Republican, sprung from obscure parentage, and neglectful entirely of his apparel and personal appearance; the other was a Monarchist, although living in a Republic, well-born and well-educated, and particular to a fault about his dress. However, both were great, and it would be hard to decide which deserved the greater amount of admiration.

At last, after some hours, we rattle slowly over the great bridge that traverses the noble Susquehannah; then Havre-de-Grace is reached; in an hour afterward the Gunpowder and Bush Rivers are traversed—head-quarters of the droves of wild fowl that frequent Maryland during the Winter. At length I am in Baltimore, and a hack takes me to the Gilmour House, where I shall remain some days. On

the morrow I found that the hospitality for which the inhabitants of Maryland and Virginia are proverbial was not forgotten, and ere I had been there twenty-four hours I had received half as many invitations.

In Baltimore there are three clubs, all equally good and equally worthy of the city and its inhabitants. Of two of these institutions I was made an honorary member, so take this opportunity of returning thanks to the members generally, and to the gentlemen particularly, who were kind enough to obtain for me an *entrée* which assisted most materially in making my stay in their city so enjoyable.

It is not until late years that clubs have become popular in the United States, for the commoner classes long opposed their establishment, under the plea that they were adverse to equality, and consequently to Republican institutions. But the upper classes of Maryland, although as loyal as any other people in the Union, had aristocratic tendencies, doubtlessly imbibed from their cavalier ancestry; so, regardless of the voice and opposition of the *canaille*, they establish-

ed the Maryland Club, when the gentlemen of other states would have been too weak-hearted, or too desirous of catering to the good opinion of the masses, to attempt such an unpopular step. Twelve years ago the Maryland Club was celebrated all over the Union ; it was regarded with pride by the educated and well-born—with suspicion by the demagogues of the ultra-radical party ; but the gentlemen of Maryland cared nought for the opinions of outside States, yet proved to those of their own that they were deserving of the full confidence of their own citizen inhabitants.

But the horrible war that was forced upon the Southern States came, and the leading persons connected with the institution, if capable of bearing arms, almost to a man went to give assistance to the confederacy, while those who were past the meridian of life withdrew from the public eye. When Federal troops occupied Baltimore, they took possession of this Club-house, and the result to the interior of the building—the library, handsome reception-rooms, and wine-cellars—was such as

might have been anticipated by all those who knew the class and spirit of the alien mercenaries who chiefly composed the invading force.

With the termination of hostilities the building was restored to its rightful owners; but how few were they then, for the battle-field had given death the power to cull from its members a large proportion of those who had been the life, soul, and light of the establishment. So strangers were brought in to fill up the vacancies that had occurred, and many of these differing in politics from the old *regime*, surviving members retired; so that, at the present day, but few of the good old stock remain. However, if the Maryland Club be less aristocratic now than in former years, it is none the less hospitable and enjoyable as a place of resort.

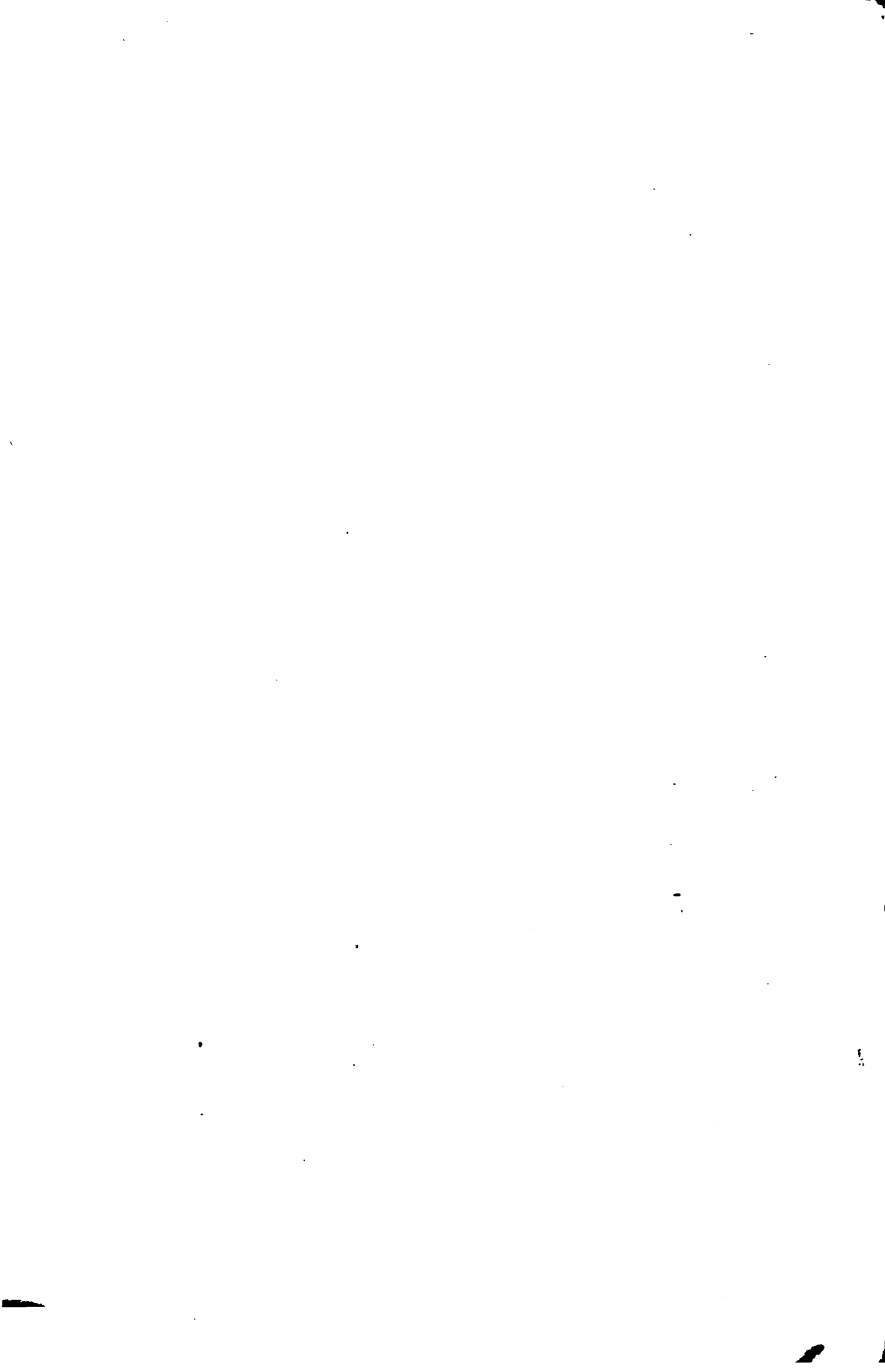
The Alston Club is also an admirable institution, eschewing politics, but paying great attention to its cuisine, wine-cellar, and literary and musical pursuits. In both of these institutions I made the acquaintance of sportsmen who were as thorough in every respect, from the breaking and hunting of a pointer to the killing of game,

as I ever met with in my previous life. A marked characteristic about American gentlemen partial to field-sports is their love of natural history ; and it has often struck me that the majority of them use shooting more as a means to accomplish the object of gaining information regarding the habits of the wild animals they pursue, than to make heavy bags. Americans, as a rule, are very good shots ; but their field accomplishments, as I have stated, do not end here, for being persevering, acute, and observant, they can find game more rapidly than any who are less acquainted with the special characteristics of the birds or quadrupeds they are in pursuit of.

Baltimore has for years been a favourite resort for natural historians—possibly a reason why the population have got imbued with such a taste for it. Bonaparte made this city his home ; Audubon frequently visited it ; and even Wilson, once the poor Scotch weaver, selected often its locality for perfecting or completing his researches. In praise of the admirable works of the first, it would be super-

fluous for me to speak. The second is, or ought to be, known to the whole world. And the third laboured so perseveringly and so successfully, that what he wrote three quarters of a century ago, modern discoverers have only succeeded in confirming.

Loving natural history better than all studies in the world, and reading with delight and admiration all works touching on my hobby, I could not deprive myself of the pleasure of paying a visit to the large, comfortable-looking residence of the American representative of the Napoleons. As I stood in front of the building, wondering which window might be the one that gave light to the study of the prince and naturalist, a large, powerfully built, dark person left the hall-door. At the crossing of the street we met ; casually I raised my eyes to his face, and I beheld, in features and figure, not in size, a prototype of what I always fancied the first Emperor to have been. It required no one to tell me he was a Napoleon—one glance was sufficient to convince me that he was.



CHAPTER V.

A YOUNG AMERICAN—THE DIAMOND-BACKED TERRAPIN—THE
SLIDER AND THE LITTLE WOOD-TORTOISE—A FELLOW-
COUNTRYMAN—A TERRAPIN DINNER—SAMBO'S MERRIMENT
—THE NEGRO POPULATION AS IT WAS AND AS IT IS—
MELANCHOLY IMPRESSIONS—A PLEASURE IN PROSPECT—
AN OFFICIOUS YANKEE—A SAFISH LINE TO FOLLOW--AN
ORATOR DUMBFOUNDED.

CHAPTER V.

IN my passage across the Atlantic I had made the acquaintance of an exceedingly good-hearted, kind young gentleman from Baltimore. On my arrival in his city he did everything to make my visit enjoyable, by introducing me to friends, offering me shooting, and even horses to ride or conveyances to drive. But, like all young Americans, he was so immersed in business pursuits during the day that I found it was impossible to have the pleasure of his society till his day's labours were finished.

Coming out of a restaurant, where I had been lunching, I came across him; and in response to my greeting he informed me that I was the very man he desired to see—for that he wished me to sup with him that evening at his club,

where I should meet a countryman. Being disengaged, I with pleasure accepted. Then it was confided to me that he had succeeded in obtaining terrapins, the dish *par excellence* of Maryland, not even excepting the far-famed canvas-backed duck. Of the correctness of his statement, as far as their excellence went, I was quite aware—for in years gone by I had, on more than one opportunity, indulged myself in this most palatable dish. But all have not been in Maryland, so a description of this chelonian is necessary.

The diamond-backed terrapin does not exceed fourteen or fifteen inches in length, by eight or nine in width; the majority, however, being considerably smaller. The shell on the back is more arched than in other tortoises, and exceeding strong. They are very slow in their locomotion, and confine themselves almost entirely to vegetable diet. Being perfectly harmless and exceedingly timid, they are difficult to find, except by those skilled in their pursuit. Of late years they have become very scarce, for their value has increased so greatly,

that the poor things are hunted with such perseverance, that the race is threatened with extinction.

Sometimes other species of tortoises are brought into requisition to fill their place—such as the slider, which is possessed of a very large and comparatively flat shell; or the little wood-tortoise, remarkable for the brilliant colouring on the lower shell; and the snapper, to be given a wide berth for being possessed of a vindictiveness of character which is indomitable, a length of neck that almost knows no bounds, a strength of jaw that surpasses the bull-dog's, with a determination to bite, and a celerity in laying hold, which are on a par. The uninitiated had better remember this, or they may gain an experience which will last them a lifetime, without their being able to associate one redeeming point to balance the disagreeables. But none of these species, although all good food, can be for a moment compared with the diamond-backed terrapin; and the connoisseur will in a moment detect if the cook or the caterer has made an attempt to substitute the one for the other.

At last ten o'clock, the hour appointed for supper, arrived, and as the city bells struck the hour I entered the club-house. In the reception-room I met my friend and my countryman, the latter of whom was a pleasant-enough person, had seen a great deal of London life, and had a personal acquaintance with a few celebrities, but beyond possibly a trip to Paris, or a run up the Rhine, knew nothing about the outer world beyond his parent-land. However, like a great many persons of his experience, he believed what he did not know was not worth knowing ; and thus a conscious manner, indicative of satisfaction with himself, showed itself dominant in all he said or did.

Presently the coloured butler announced that our meal was on the table. Into the dining-room we at once proceeded, and when the cover of the smoking dish of terrapin was removed, a bouquet something more delicate than an odour reached our nostrils. The appearance of this dish, when perfectly cooked, is very dark, not unlike stewed mushrooms ; but this is relieved by the surface being studded over with

the brilliant yellow pea-sized eggs of the tortoise. Well, to say that we enjoyed our repast is only to express ourselves as we would after having eaten a well-cooked leg of mutton—we did more, if such was possible; and the cook and the terrapin ultimately had praises showered upon them, intervals in the feast only occurring when we wished to express our laudation, or imbibe a fresh glass of Moselle or Madeira, both of which wines were so excellent as to be fit companions for the food they washed down.

When the remains of the heavily-punished terrapin had been removed, our host asked my countryman if he would like to see one of the creatures off which he had made so hearty a meal. On being answered in the affirmative, the grinning, ubiquitous darky who waited on us was ordered to produce one. In a few moments Sambo returned, bearing a salver, on which was placed the interesting chelonian. However, our friend did not observe it being brought in, for his back was towards the door; nor was he aware of its presence till the nigger,

grinning from ear to ear, placed it quickly in front of our English friend, our host at the same time stating "This is a terrapin." Mr. —, on catching sight of it, almost bounced off his chair, his eyes dilated to nearly twice their natural size—in fact, I am not quite certain that his wonderfully-arranged hair did not stand on end as he exclaimed, in the most measured, slow Dundreary language, "Ma goodness gwacious, I thought it was a bir-r-rd!"

All naturally were convulsed; and Sambo, who had not the same power of restraining his risibility, left the room hurriedly, on being threatened with an immediate application of a patent leather boot to a protuberant part of his person. A well-fed ducky is a jolly, happy fellow, and more capable of appreciating anything funny than the phlegmatic and less impulsive white race; and every time afterwards during that evening, while he waited upon us, that he caught our companion's eye, he could only succeed in suppressing his merriment by the most desperate efforts, which distorted his face into the most absurd shapes.

I am not a believer in slavery being right; but when I look back upon the South as I first saw it, and on the happy, frolicsome, well-cared for, well-kept coloured population, and compare them with the free negroes of the present day, how unjust and miserable has been the policy of these improvident people who, in forcing upon them freedom, deprived them of home, protection, and food. The mortality amongst them since this took place has only to be referred to to prove the truth of what I state. An old coloured waiter at the club, who recognized me after so many years of absence, when helping me to put on my coat, sighed out, in a most melancholy, feeling voice,

“Terrible time for darkies since you be here, sar. Terrible time for gemmen too. When shall we ever see the good old time again? Never, sar, no, never in this darky’s life.”

There was much to make me sad in Baltimore. Friends I had known had gone for ever, and the scenes that surrounded me painfully recalled their memory, so I determined to push on, and among new faces and other scenes the more

rapidly to forget the past. Moreover a pleasure was in store for me—one that I had long looked forward to—an unrestricted sojourn on the finest duck-shooting waters, probably, in the world. Having come to this resolve, I made my arrangements to leave on the morrow; so when I had finished breakfast, I sallied out to smoke my morning cigar, and mentally consider the next move I was to take on the board of life. The weather had changed for the better, and its influence on me was to cause me to feel less low-spirited.

“I see, sir, you are a man of observation,” was remarked to me by a hatchet-faced, dyspeptic, raw-boned individual, who was chewing—not smoking—the stump of an enormous cigar. I had seen this person before, and had come to the conclusion—whether erroneous or not I cannot say—that he desired to scrape an acquaintance with me; but he looked such an inquisitive, officious personage, that up to this time I had successfully eluded his attempts. However, when a veritable Yankee of the far down East stock resolves upon doing a thing, better

let him have his way, for he will accomplish his purpose somehow or other. Of course, previous to this he must have noticed that I slipped away from the bar when he approached it; or if I was talking to a coterie of Americans, excused myself on the plea of an appointment, or business, when he attempted to join us. But not deterred with these rebuffs, he cornered me on the verandah, where I had retired to smoke my after-breakfast weed; and as he stood so as to cut off my retreat, I made a virtue of necessity, and submitted, resolved to grasp at the first opportunity to frame an excuse to avoid the cross-questioning I was fully aware was in store for me; so I replied,

“I am pleased to believe that you think so; and really, without flattery, I must say that I think you are the same.”

“Wall, yes, I’m tolerably cute, and no mistake, in my business. We Americans soon cut our eye-teeth.”

After saying this he paused, as if expecting me to inquire the nature of his occupation; but I desisted, for if I had set such an example of

inquisitiveness it would have been at once followed, and I should have been without an excuse for refusing to submit.

"I'm a pedlar. The agricultural implement trade is my speciality, but it's not now so good as it was, no, not by long odds, the d——d war has played the dickens with the South. But excuse me, stranger, what are your politics?"

To so direct a question I was obliged to answer, which I did by assuring him that, being a foreigner, I was neither called upon, nor had any desire, to mix myself up in a family quarrel.

"A safish line to follow, if it were not for the too popular belief that those who are not for you are against you. But, mister, you do not object to say—and you being a military man, your opinion would be worth the hearing—whether you think General Grant or Lee the greater man."

"I am surprised to hear a man of your experience ask such a question, for can there be any doubt but that the successful rival must be the greater? Success is the standard by which all

men are judged : the Emperor of Germany is a greater man than the Emperor of the French."

"And," added my new acquaintance, not giving a moment's rest, "Washington is superior to all the generals of King George, and the everlasting Yankee nation superior to the Britishers, who previous to that had been the first people on the earth. I said you were a man of observation. I did so because I noticed you were taking a pretty close look at that monument ; of course you know why it was placed there. Well, if I must tell you, to commemorate our independence, and the birth-day to the world of liberty and freedom."

One of my acquaintances came up and joined us. His appearance I thought might be made a good excuse to get away from my tormentor ; but I was not afforded a chance, for he continued to speak to me as if he were a stump orator addressing a political gathering.

"Yes, sir, as I say, we beat you in '76, and we did so again in 1812, and will do so if the *Alabama* claims are not paid in full. There in front of you stands a monument in remembrance

of our first victory ; search the city and you will doubtless find one of our second."

My friend here came to my rescue.

"Excuse me, sir, if I inform you that you are wrong ; Baltimore I know certainly as well as you do, probably better, and no such erection is to be found within its limits."

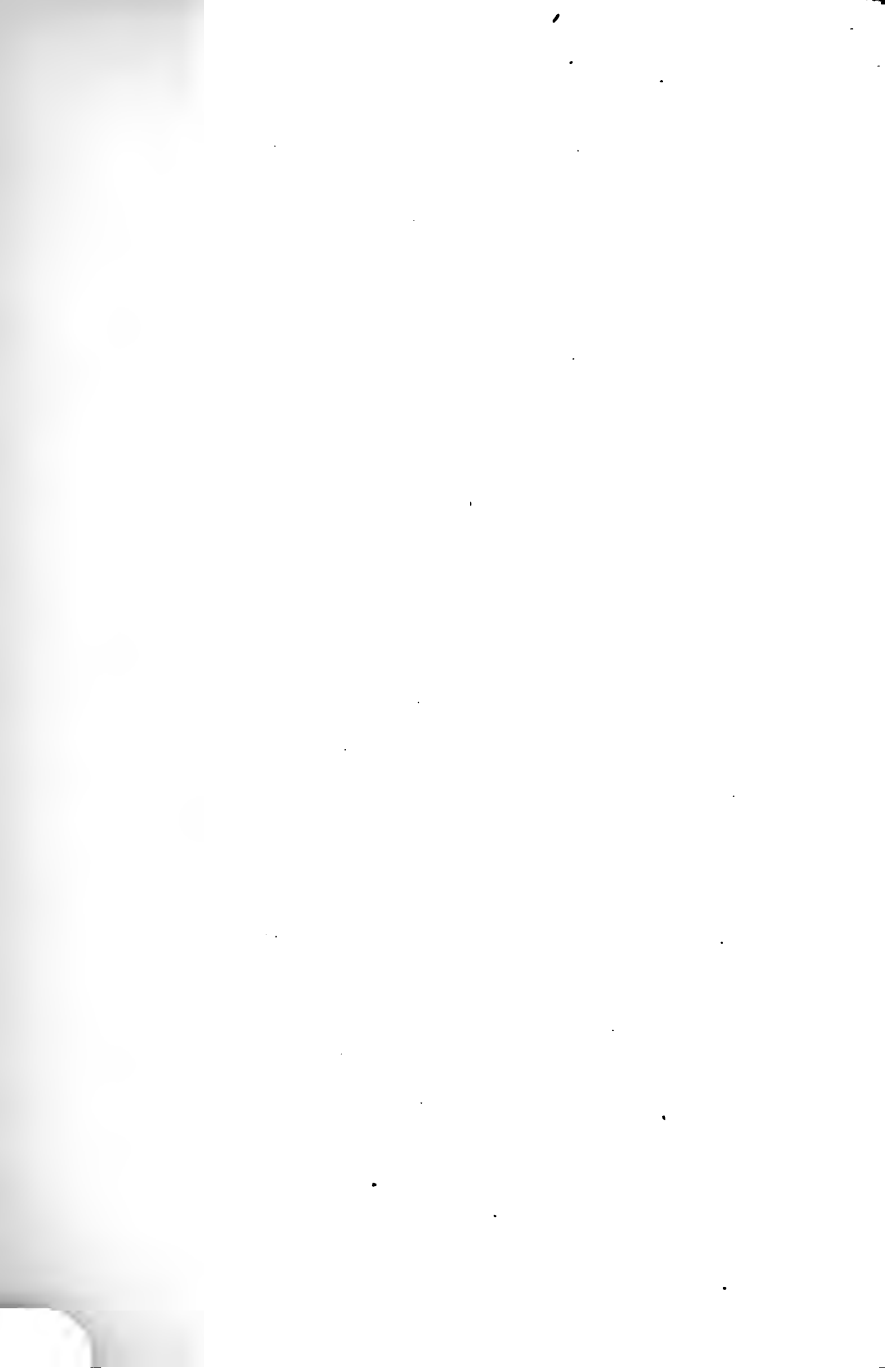
"Well," thundered out the inquisitor, "there ought to be ; such neglect of an army of brave patriots, whose courage and perseverance ensured them victory whenever they met the foe."

"Again sir, I must plead for your forbearance," a second time commenced my friend, "for I differ most widely from you in my knowledge of the war of which you speak ; for if we confine ourselves to the truth, we shall find that we invaded Canada and were driven out of it, and that the British troops actually captured and sacked our capital, Washington."

The orator appeared dumbfounded, which we seized as an opportunity to escape, and did so with flying colours.

CHAPTER VI.

ANECDOTE OF THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE—HIS POPULARITY
—REMINISCENCES OF AMERICA—A POSSUM WANTED—AN
EDITOR'S APPEAL TO HIS FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN—A "GEM-
MAN" WITH A POSSUM—PATRIOTIC ARDOUR—AN OPPOR-
TUNE INTERRUPTION—A POSSUM-HUNT—THE BAYING OF
THE DOGS—THE TOWN AROUSED—POSSUM UP THE MONU-
MENT.



CHAPTER VI.

AS we passed up the street, and by the very monument in question, my companion informed me that he could tell me a story in reference to it that would cause me much amusement; moreover that it had nothing to do with war, or the antipathies between our respective countries.

“You are aware how the Marquis de Lafayette came over from France, soon after our struggle for independence had commenced, accompanied by men and munitions of war, the use of which were to be tendered to the infant Republic, to assist her in obtaining her independence. Friends of the Marquis say he was prompted to this step through a desire to see a noble people obtain redress for their wrongs; while others, who possi-

bly are less partial to his memory, go so far as to state that the Frenchman was induced to take the step from the desire of revenge he harboured against England for real or imaginary wrongs. Well, whether or not, he was very useful to us; and, as might be expected, when peace was declared, he became one of the most popular men of the day, and was fêted and courted wherever he went. Is it therefore surprising that Lafayette returned to France, brimful of affection for the new land, and filled to repletion with praises of its people. Time rolled on, and the previous overcast political horizon of Europe became more settled, so the Marquis retired to his country residence, and devoted the greater portion of his time and means to making the ancestral seat of his forefathers as much like an American home as possible. The more thoroughly to carry out this idea, he imported into his demesne every description of American tree, shrub, or plant, nor did he rest here, but through the medium of his trans-atlantic friends, had all the indigenous animals of the Western continent that could be obtained, forwarded to him for

acclimatization on his patrimonial estate. All appeared to go well in his undertaking. The hickory, maple, and sumach took root and flourished; wild turkeys, Virginian deer, and racoons fearlessly ran about and played in their new home.

But still the Marquis was not happy; for one animal he did not possess. This fact was communicated by him to an old and valued friend who lived in Baltimore, who at the time occupied an important Government position, as well as being editor of a leading newspaper. In the Frenchman's dilemma he could not have applied to a better person to assist him in his difficulty, as the sequel will show.

A few days after our worthy citizen had received the letter indited to him by Lafayette, an advertisement appeared in his paper to the following effect:—

“Citizens of Maryland, to whom do we owe so much gratitude as we do to the gallant and courteous Marquis de Lafayette, who so nobly came to our aid in those days of deep affliction and distress that threatened to swamp the

bark of the infant Republic, in its first efforts to float? Through his aid our prospect of success was increased, the struggle abbreviated, and additional lustre reflected upon our arms. However, duty, a call to which the true soldier ever listens, deprived us of his services, for his native land demanded his presence. But through all the turmoil of an arduous and fatiguing political life, he has never forgotten the Government he helped to establish, or his devoted true friends who are its citizens; but being debarred by the calls of duty from residing among those whom his heart would have selected as companions, and witnessing the scenes peculiar to the land of his love, he has imported into France, and placed upon his magnificent estate, every procurable description of the animal and vegetable kingdom peculiar to this continent. However, in a letter which I had the honour to receive from this noble French gentleman, he informs me with regret that he has up to the present time been unable to obtain any possums. Let this want be immediately obviated—never let it be said that we were wanting in gratitude, so let

one and all turn out and scour the woods, so that the first vessel bearing the stars and stripes at her peak, and bound to the shores of La Belle France, be the bearer of a sufficient number of these rare marsupials, to prove to our valued old friend and comrade in arms that although thousands of miles of ocean may divide us, and years rolled on since he was in our midst, his memory is still brightly emblazoned in our hearts.

“The editor begs to add that he will be happy to attend to the shipping of the possums; also will pay all charges upon the same, and will in every instance take care that the noble Marquis be made aware of the name and address of the donor.”

The proprietor of the paper, who was a great tuft-hunter in his way, as well as being deservedly one of the most popular men in the State, is said to have confidentially informed an acquaintance that, if such a notice as the above did not bring a couple or two of possums, he did not know what would; nor did he calculate without his host. As a matter of course it

required some days for the periodical to get circulated through the length and breadth of the state of Maryland, for in those times there was no back-bone line of railroad through the eastern-shore counties; and the Baltimore and Ohio lines had not been thought of; nor did daily and nightly boats then sail, in spite of wind and weather, for Norfolk, Crestfield, Pokomoke, or Tincotique.

Three days passed without any result, a proof that possums were not numerous in the vicinity of the city, and were only obtainable from the less settled and further distant localities, and to hear from those remote parts scarcely enough time had elapsed, so that virtue, patience, was exercised. However, on the fourth day, as the editor sat in his sanctuary, surrounded by files of cotemporaries, clippings from innumerable columns, proofs for future issues, and the never-absent, in such retreats, paste-pot and brush, Pompey, the confidential black servant, informed his massa that a gemman was downstairs, and wished to see him on most particularly urgent business.

"Show him up," said the man of letters; and soon the grinning negro returned, followed by the visitor. As soon as the sable attendant had retired, and his steps on the stairs ceased to be heard, the stranger informed Mr. S—— that he had read with the greatest pleasure his address to the citizens of Maryland; that it had made his bosom glow with patriotic ardour, much as a 4th of July oration would have affected him; and that he had in the bag in his hand three as prime possums, all right in limb and body, as ever were eaten at a darky camp-meeting, which I do wish you, mister, to send to the Marquis with my respects. So just take your pen, mister, and I'll give you my name and address."

The editor patiently did as he was bidden, and through rapid penmanship, and a more than ordinary knowledge of the country, indited the stranger's name, abode, wife's relatives, number of his children, both male and female, his religious views and his worldly prospects, and how much more history does not narrate, when Pompey again popped his head in at the door,

and informed his master that a gemman, who was in a great hurry, desired to speak with him for a few moments. The interruption was opportune. The bag with its contents was handed to Pompey, who, by his master's instructions, was ordered to turn the animals out in the attic. This duty performed, the stranger was dismissed, after a mutual interchange of expressions of regard and affection.

The second stranger soon after entered. His mission was the same as that of the first, only he had got five possums instead of three, of whose particular beauty, as well as present value in the Baltimore market, he wished the Marquis to be informed—adding, also, that he had travelled an immense distance to serve the friend of his country in the day of trouble, not forgetting to finish off with the information that his corn was a mess-crop this year, and that, as such was the case, he and his family had the agreeable prospect of starving throughout the coming Winter.

Again Pompey made his entrance; this time he had to announce two gemmans, who, having

entered the hall at the same moment, were squabbling who was first to have an interview. But Mr. S—— was proverbial for being equal to all occasions ; so he informed Pompey that age always took precedence, at the same time ordering him to turn out the five opossums in the attic; after which stranger No 2 was got rid of—but not our friend the editor's labours. He wrote and wrote each visitor's address, ailments, &c., &c., till the hour became so late that he felt justified in refusing to grant further audiences. Moreover, he had already twenty times the number of animals he desired ; at the same time, he dared not refuse to accept all that came, after the great trouble that they had doubtless given the captors to procure.

In all countries it is better to have friends than enemies—in America it is more particularly so, for, if you are a politician or an office-seeker, you never know when you may require any vote you can command, and not unfrequently the support or opposition of a single person may make or mar your prospects.

The second day was worse even than the

first for our unfortunate editor. From morning to night the door bell never ceased ringing, or Pompey trotting to and from the attic room, loaded; but as the creatures increased in numbers they commenced to fight over their food, to gnaw the planks and beams, threatening a collapse in the roof, while the smell that emanated from their place of confinement was worse than the concentrated essence obtained from the bouquet of a guinea-pig or rabbit-hutch. The old gentleman, seeing no end to the influx of possums, went nearly out of his mind—he is even reported to have boxed Pompey's ears, a thing he had never done before in his life, because that sable individual grinned when announcing a fresh arrival of not less than half-a-dozen; but a little consideration should have been shown to his servant, when it is stated that he probably saw visions of hashed, stewed, baked, and boiled possum for an indefinite period, and there is no food that a darky believes its equal.

At length the house was closed for the night, and all visitors denied admittance—thus granting time for thought and action ere the next

day should break. Under such a trying ordeal, is it surprising that a confidential friend should be called upon for advice? Long the two old cronies sat over their whisky and bacca. A decision had been arrived at, but the time for putting it into operation was not yet come. However, their patience was ultimately rewarded by the clock on the mantelpiece showing that midnight had been passed some time; so the associates stole forth, and awoke the butler and the coachman, two old niggers, in whose silence they had perfect confidence. From the stable bags were procured, and, like thieves on a marauding expedition, the four silently sought the attic. In time, and after no ordinary amount of exertion, each bag was filled, and the darky servants sent off at the back-door, with orders to discharge its contents at the foot of the battle-monument. Faithfully the domestics did their duty, and with such stealth and circumspection that no one, not even a bobby, had seen them; till, after repeated trips, only six possums remained in the attic. Well may we imagine that our worthy friend

now breathed more freely—as he doubtlessly did, only the morrow had to be met—no, had to be avoided; so he started at break of day to his country-seat, leaving word with his servants that all visitors were to be informed that he had suddenly been attacked with a most virulent form of typhus-fever. Soon after this report got circulated, the hall-door bell entirely ceased from calling Pompey off from his other duties.

But to return to the night on which the possums were turned out. The two black servants had scarcely got rid of their last sackful of marsupials, when a wandering cur, who, if he had a master, had no right to be abroad at that hour of the night, winded one of the unfortunate late inhabitants of the editor's attic, and with his deep mellow voice, or shrill, discordant yelp, attracted others of his race, who, imagining some game was up, or sport to be enjoyed, rushed to the spot whence the warning note of their companion emanated. The tainted night-air told the tale. Again and again the quiet streets reverberated with the voice of

the dogs, again and again the echoes were awoke by the notes of their constantly-increasing numbers, till every dog who had his liberty, and power to join in the pursuit, rushed to the chase; while every faithful guardian of his master's home who was confined by chain or kennel, made night hideous with his howlings, the only means he possessed of expressing his regret at not being able to join his brethren in the pursuit.

But the hunt was not protracted. The poor possum who had been more venturous than his fellows in his efforts to discover an exit from the town, immediately that he found he was discovered by his natural enemy, man's faithful companion, beat a precipitate retreat for the monument, on which he and all his companions immediately sought shelter. Fortunate it was for the poor strangers that bountiful nature had furnished them with the means of climbing, or else many must have become acquainted with the merciless assailants that now barked notes of wrath around their temporary sanctuary.

Such a disturbance had never been heard previously in the orderly good city of Baltimore. Sleep became an utter impossibility to those who resided in this central part of the city, so that soon from every residence lights were seen glancing, which, if they had revealed all they shone upon, would have exposed heads of families getting ready their weapons of defence ; young wives in their night-dresses clinging frantically to their newly-wedded spouses ; old ladies begging their sons not to be too rash, and expose themselves ; or young misses in hysterics at the thought that dear Augustus, or charming Charles, while away from their view, might recklessly expose his precious person in some desperate deed of valour ; for one and all of the good people believed that the inhabitants of *perfidious Albion* had taken advantage of the security the inhabitants had felt, from a protracted peace, to make a descent upon the peaceful homes of the unsuspecting, too-confiding people.

At length the gradual accession of numbers gave courage, and forth sallied the doughty

heroes, willing to die in the defence of their *lares* and *penates*; but, to their surprise, no red-coated soldiers or gigantic moustachioed Hessians could they see. However, that such was the case did not detract from the valour of the deeds they would have done, and it is still to be considered a merciful act of Providence that they were not required to do them. Still the dogs kept baying around the monument, with possibly more vigour than formerly; for man's presence ever gives them renewed powers of exertion and increased vindictiveness towards their prey.

Daylight not having yet arrived, and the moon having long since set, it became necessary to obtain a lantern to investigate what could possibly be concealed among the scroll and ornamental work of the monument so thoroughly objectionable to the canine community, for all the efforts of the good citizens could not induce the blood-thirsty curs to retire, or cease baying. At length the light was brought, and a faithful nigger with it in his hand ascended to search; but he had scarcely gained the summit ere his eyes were greeted with such a view that he let go his hold

and fell to the ground. The light was thus extinguished, and, worse than all, the poor darky, either through fear or the effects of the fall, was unable to furnish any information.

This mishap, however, did not deter another volunteer from being found. Slowly but steadily he ascended. On reaching the summit he exclaimed, "Oh, golly, massa!" and dropped from his perch to the ground. On being catechised, he stated that he had seen a "tousand possum on top of monument!" Such an absurdity was of course disbelieved, and poor Sambo got well cuffed, and possibly tolerably kicked, for telling what was such an unquestionable lie. In fact, I am not certain but that he was sent to the caboose, and ordered a couple of dozen with the cat, for attempting to deceive so respectable a body of citizens.

At length day broke, and with its acceptable light the truth of Sambo's assertion was verified; and whether through vindictiveness at all the trouble the helpless animals had caused, or a desire to regale upon their succulent flesh, a

fusilade was opened upon the unfortunates, till all had perished.

The advent of these possums was viewed in different lights: the religious thought that it predicted a rapid end to the earth; others, of a more patriotic turn of mind, thought that Providence had sent them on account of the advertisement that appeared, so that the noble soldier of the glorious Republic might have his desire gratified; while able naturalists prophesied that the phenomenon predicted a scarcity of crops in some localities, and an excess in others, or a flood here, and a dearth of water there. In all of which the good editor of the — agreed, writing articles for weeks in his columns in support of each hypothesis.

Strange to say, it was many years ere the true and correct version of this story became known, so carefully did Mr. S——, his friend, and the darky servants, keep their secret.



CHAPTER VII.

DUCK-SHOOTING—AN OFFER NOT TO BE REFUSED—ROUTES TO
ANNAPOLIS—THE CITY OF QUEEN ANNE—THE SENATORS
AND LEGISLATORS—THE SONS OF MARYLAND—NAVAL
SCHOOL—FLIRTATIONS OF THE MIDDIES—NEWPORT—THE
ARMY AND THE REPUBLIC—IRON-CLAD SHIPS OF WAR—
IMPORTANT DISCOVERY—OLD SAM—A DREARY JOURNEY.



CHAPTER VII.

FROM all the inquiries I have made, and those made for me by friends, I discover that, from the severity of the weather, no duck-shooting will be obtainable, unless I go down the bay sufficiently far to find open water. The poor ducks cannot make an opening with their sensitive bills through the ice, so are compelled to leave their favourite feeding-grounds on the Susquehannah flats, the Bush and Gunpowder rivers, for the lower portion of the bay, where open water is to be found.

As the great shooting-grounds are out of the route of the ordinary traffic, I have resolved to proceed to Annapolis; for a very kind friend and excellent good fellow, John S——, has promised to get me, through the means of his

acquaintances there assembled, as the State legislature is at this time sitting in that town, a passage in one of the police-boats. Of course such an offer was not to be refused, and next morning we agreed to meet to carry out our purpose.

There are two ways of going to Annapolis, by boat or rail. In fine weather the former way is the most popular, but now, with the ground covered with snow, and the upper portion of the bay covered with ice, the majority of persons would prefer trusting themselves to the iron horse. As I know the sail down the Chesapeake, from Baltimore to Annapolis, is pretty, if not grand, and characteristic of this portion of America, I determined to trust myself to the sea. The boat started at an unconscionable hour—8 A.M., I think. This entailed an early breakfast, which is invariably uncomfortable; but the early rising and dressing by gaslight I did not so much object to on this occasion, as a gentleman, whom I had found a most delightful companion, had volunteered to see me so far on my journey. We met at the

wharf, as agreed, and for a long time it was doubtful whether we should be able to proceed, as it had frozen so sharply during the previous night, that the slip in which the steamboat lay was covered with a strong coating of ice. But if a thing is to be accomplished, trust that an American will do it, for he is bound to try. At the appointed hour the paddles were put in motion, and the ground-swell which their evolutions caused broke the ice that surrounded our craft; then we backed, and rushed forward, repeating this manœuvre for at least half an hour, till ultimately a passage was opened for us to get on under a considerable head of speed; and so we kept crushing and bursting through the ice till we reached our destination.

I never saw a more attractive scene than the Chesapeake when enclosed in this arctic coating, for the sun rose brilliantly, and its rays were reflected through a thousand prisms, that scattered far and wide innumerable brilliant colours; while the trees that formed the margin still retained sufficient, although withered foliage to give warmth to the picture.

On our way down no wild duck were seen, except coots, which are here familiarly termed "tar-buckets." The thirty or forty miles between the two ports was soon traversed, and we anchored, immediately after mid-day, at the city of Queen Anne, one of the oldest, quaintest, and most aristocratic places in the United States.

After securing rooms at the Maryland Hotel, one of the first things I had to do was to go to the State House, where my friend introduced me to half the Senators and Legislators of the State at that time assembled there. A more gentlemanly collection of men I have seldom seen, and in appearance they were capital representatives of the cavaliers of King Charles's day. Several whom I could mention looked so like persons I have seen represented in pictures of Sir Francis Lely, and other artists of his school and day, that you might imagine they had stepped out of the canvas at Hampton Court. He who says that an English gentleman is not liked in America speaks not of Maryland, or forgets that such a state exists, for never in my life have I found persons more devoted in heart and

soul to the land of their progenitors than these sons of "my Maryland."

When I looked around me, and gazed at the handsome, finely-chiselled features, and manly forms of these people, I ceased to wonder that the South had fought so obstinately, and so long successfully opposed the invasion of the North; for although the state of Maryland did not go out of the Union, there was scarcely a citizen of it of such an age as to be useful in arms that did not cast his fortunes in with that of the "bonnie blue flag."

If not for its rustic and aristocratic proclivities, Annapolis is well worth visiting for the inspection of the Naval School, an establishment at which the greater number of the most celebrated of United States mariners have been educated. The situation of this institution has been most admirably selected to afford opportunities for study in the peculiar line of science to which it is devoted, for it is placed upon a jutting peninsula, surrounded with deep water on three sides, and before which stretches away in the distance the open waters of Chesapeake Bay,

its shores on all parts fringed with timber, except where a clearing has been made to give place for a comfortable farm homestead or neat picturesque cottage.

The buildings of the Naval School are large and commodious—barracks for students, bungalows for officers, mess-rooms, gardens, and shrubberies being distributed over the area in the nicest order and in the best taste. On the lawn, which is a beautiful piece of turf, the band plays two or three times a week, when all the wealth and fashion of the vicinity attend. Of course great flirtations occur, and many a middy, on being appointed to a ship, has found himself possessed of a better half. However, it does not occur here that lads begin to serve their flag and country at such an early age as in England.

In fact, Annapolis Naval School was to the United States Navy what West Point is to her Army. I say was, because the glory of this place has departed, and a powerful rival has been established at Newport, in the North. The reason of this is that Annapolis was too Southern

in her proclivities ; and even Northern youths became tainted with her aristocratic tendencies when sent to study there. The good-looking, sprightly lasses of Maryland worked havoc in the hearts of the juvenile sailors, and whispered in their ears words of pride, of birth, and lineage, which sadly clashed with the ideas of their Puritan parents.

A regular army and navy never can be thoroughly republican in feelings. The professions, in all their details of duty, are essentially monarchical, and the daily associations tend to increase a feeling of pride of station and power. I do not know many American naval or military officers, but out of that limited number I could select several who have implicitly told me that they would gladly see their great country change its form of government.

Off the point at Annapolis lay two great curiosities in the shape of naval architecture—viz., the well-known schooner yacht *America*, and an immense Monitor. Let us speak of the former first. Here she now performs the duties of a training-ship for the cadets ; and if the

United States have any pride, she should for the rest of her existence be devoted to that purpose. What a varied career has this schooner's been! Still she looks as beautiful as ever; nor has the lapse of time touched her heavily. During the war between the North and South, she was captured blockade-running, and the powers that be have not thought proper to release their hold of her. Her masts have been shortened, to enable her to make better weather in a heavy sea, and but for this alteration it would still take a smart craft to show her its stern-post. The *America* belongs to the people that ought to own her, and who ought to be proud of her, for she won as gallant and memorable a victory as ever was obtained.

But to the Monitor: she is of tremendous length and breadth (her exact proportions I do not know), with a remarkably low free-board, her sides, above the water-line, being covered with the thickest iron plates. I did not see her under steam, but I will say what I heard of her, viz., that "she was the most 'tarnation fraud' ever launched!" This I believe, for her build-

ing was one of those shoddy contract-jobs which were so numerous distributed during the war. She won't steer, and won't carry her armament. Can anything be more monstrous? What would grumbling Englishmen say if the nation had paid for such a baby?

But building ironclad ships is a perfect absurdity, because land has always the advantage over vessels for the working of cannon, and guns can always be made large enough to smash any iron plates that can be floated. That sensible people can run away with the idea that such is the manner in which our future navies are to be made impregnable, I can believe, if they are iron-masters, not if they are anything else. However, iron-plating has been discussed so often, and so frequently brought before the public, that I almost believe many people accept it as the only means of making a ship capable of resisting shot, without using their own brains to think whether it is right or wrong.

Well, what say you if I state that I can make a vessel shot-proof without injuring her sea-going qualities? That you are a presumptuous

idiot, I hear many exclaim. Well, so be it; you are entitled to your opinion—that we will not argue. I can, I say, make a vessel shot-proof, and would be too happy to prove it, only that the attempt to interview great men, even gratuitously to offer them for the country's benefit the result of years of study and thought, is surrounded with so much difficulty, sometimes discourtesy, that I have kept this to myself. How unpatriotic!—how wrong! Well, it may be both, but it is certainly the course most likely to minister to my comfort. There are often a dozen ways of accomplishing a desired end; in this matter I see but one, and it is so thoroughly different from the idea which has taken hold of the public mind, so thoroughly out of the trodden path that men's ideas have been running in, that no one seems to have thought of it. I should like to tell my readers what this pet discovery of mine is, only I won't—urging, as my pretext for this act of discourtesy, that we are not the only maritime power on the face of the earth, and that some foreign government might

adopt it, to be used, at a future date, against our common nationality. A Yankee once unsuccessfully pumped me very hard, with the hope of extracting my project; but the child of my brain shall only obtain birth at the proper time and place, if demanded—otherwise not at all. That I have taken a good means of advertising my hobby many may say; so much the better, if, by doing so, the proper persons should ultimately gain a knowledge of a most important discovery.

But I am touching on subjects which the general reader does not care about, so with pleasure revert to more agreeable matters, and pass on to the purpose of my journey—shooting wild-fowl, and learning more than I at present know of the habits of the beautiful varieties of this family that in Winter frequent this neighbourhood. But I must not forget to mention that I had been introduced to a gentleman whom I will designate Sam, who has promised not only to shoot with me on the morrow, but on all such occasions as the spirit moves me to do so.

It was a bitter cold morning when the black waiter informed me that it was time to turn out. Half asleep and half awake, rubbing my eyes as if to encourage them to perform better their duties, I looked to the window, but not a particle of light to indicate the approach of day could I distinguish. Almost hoping, certainly desiring, that the ebony son of man had made a mistake in the passage of time, and arguing with myself to justify the course of returning to my warm bed, I heard the hotel clock distinctly strike five. This was sufficient warning to throw all doubts to the winds whether it was not time to be up and doing; so, making a virtue of necessity, I soused myself into my bath, poured the contents of the water-bottle over my head and shoulders, and in five minutes after felt equal to any amount of labour.

Before I had completed dressing, the trap, accompanied by my friend, arrived at the door, when swallowing a cup of chocolate, and filling my pockets with solids for after-consumption, I hurried out.

The evening before, when we had made our arrangements for this expedition, the cold of the previous day had considerably abated, and a southern breeze had commenced to blow, indicating, as we supposed, the advent of a thaw, and consequently the prospect of good shooting wherever open water could be found; but, as the sequel shows, we were not weather-wise, for a little after midnight the wind had again veered round to the north-west, and with the change came a further fall in temperature, accompanied by snow. Such being the case, it was not surprising to me to receive the information from old Sam that "we had better remain where we were, for all the luck we should have shooting fowl;" but, being up and dressed ready for a start, I would not for a moment listen to a postponement.

"Say no more—I'm your boy," answered Sam; continuing with a laugh, "I guess I'se jist as fit to go in search of the North Pole as any Johnny Bull; so hurry up, old hoss, and jump in. Mind you don't hurt that bird-gun of yourn,

for she is jist the sweetest bit of wood an' iron that e'er I set an eye on."

In an instant afterwards I was on the seat by his side, and the old horse was picking his way through the now deserted streets of the town. After crossing the almost interminable pile bridge, over which the cold, wintry blast swept in fitful, snow-loaded gusts, we left the public road, and followed a narrow and almost indistinguishable track, turning to the right.

But for the cedars that fringed this track on one side, and the remains of an old snake-fence on the other, we should never have been able, from the drift of snow that took place during the night, to discover our way; and even now we frequently got into ruts and holes that sunk the buggy up to the hub. But Sam was a good and patient driver, and the horse willing and cautious, so that, although we progressed slowly, we did it surely.

Half an hour of such work brought us into a lane, and the surface being level and free from drift, we should have prospered famously, but that every few minutes I had to jump down

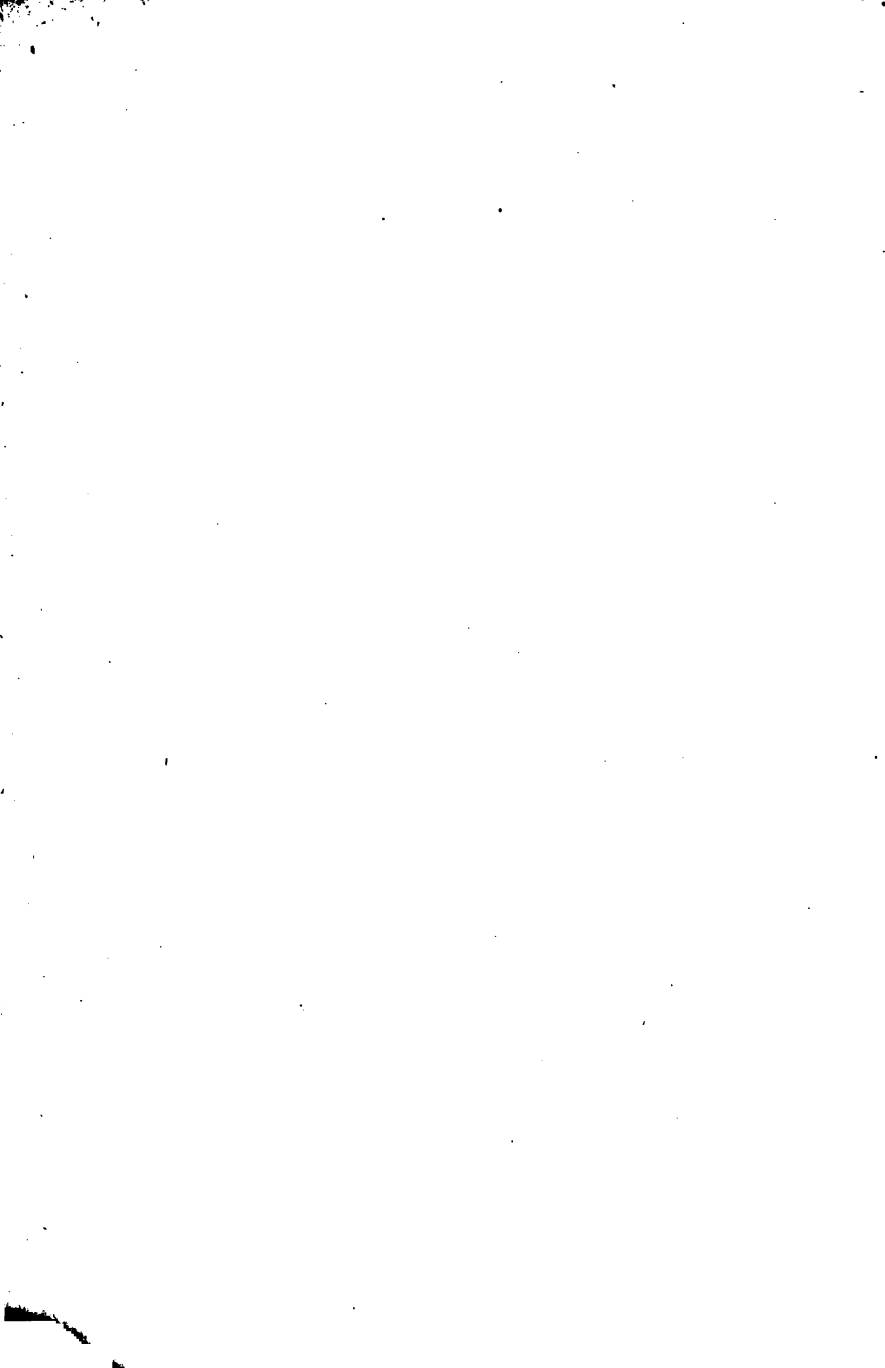
to open a gate. Now this would not have mattered much, if the gates had been good and the temperature moderate; but on this occasion they were all of the most rickety description—too strong to knock over, and sufficiently weak to require lifting round, with the thermometer a long way below freezing-point; so that every time I returned to my seat and got the buffalo-skin comfortably around my limbs, I hoped sincerely that gate-opening had ceased. But it didn't till we had nearly completed our journey, and the dregs of my patience had been reached.

At length indications of daybreak appeared, and the weather evinced signs that it intended behaving better—promises which afterwards were fully verified. In the days of prosperity what a charming country this must have been for the residence of a gentleman! But now, alas! its glory is departed. The agricultural population have fled; the homesteads and barns are ruins, the orchards neglected and overgrown with weeds, and the fences broken down, burnt, or entirely removed for fuel. Such is the

result of destroying, at one fell swoop, the legitimate labour of the land. Poor Maryland ! You truly deserve pity, for, once the home of chivalry and hospitality, now you are poverty-stricken and deserted.

CHAPTER VIII.

**A SPLENDID COUNTRY FOR SHOOTING—COSTUME FOR DUCK-
SHOOTING—SWANS—A SCENE TO BE REMEMBERED—A
CAPITAL SHOT—BEHIND THE SCREEN—A GOOD AND
SENSIBLE DOG—A PONGEY—ON THE TRACK OF FOXES—
CROSSING THE BAY ON THE ICE—FISHERMAN'S CREEK—
A STALK AFTER BLACK-HEAD DUCKS—THE NATIONAL EM-
BLEM OF AMERICA.**



CHAPTER VIII.

WITHIN a mile and a half of where we intended shooting resided a person who lived by the produce of his gun ; on him we intended to call, for the double purpose of obtaining information regarding the movements of the wild-fowl, and, if possible, his society and co-operation. Early as the hour was, we found him up and stirring. Sam being known to him, he insisted upon our dismounting and having a warm at the stove, with either a cup of coffee or something stronger, all of which we acceded to without a murmur. Even here our host's hospitality did not cease, for it was with the greatest difficulty we could prevent him ordering breakfast. The information we received here was far from encouraging ; nevertheless

our new acquaintance "guessed we might get a shot or two at the Point, where we could make use of his screens and decoys, if we thought fit," he further promising to follow us in the course of an hour, and bring with him his retriever. Again we got into the buggy, and started amid oft-repeated requests to change our minds and have a mouthful before going on; but, as a wilful woman must have her way, so, I believe, must a wilful man.

The remainder of the road we found dreadful. How the light, spidery-wheeled buggy stood the jolting truly appeared a mystery; but it did, and I thought it was more than wood and iron could perform. As it had now become daylight, we could see on every side indications of hares and partridges, with fox-tracks so numerous that, however abundant the two former animals might be, one would suppose it would require them all, if not more, to furnish sufficient food for the latter. And what a splendid country for shooting!—over fields divided and intersected by brush, unbroken grass-land, and stunted timber, with numerous water-courses.

Where several dozen cedars formed a close cover and warm place of shelter, we unhitched our good old horse, and blanketing him with the buffalo robe, left him to enjoy his corn and solitude.

Now came a very important portion of the programme that must be attended to—donning clothes similar in colour to the objects that surrounded us. So, snow and ice being in preponderance, each drew a white flannel undershirt over his costume, and replaced his ordinary head-dress by a white flannel covering; for ducks are so sharp in sight, and so suspicious, that without these precautions they never would come within range. And if ducks have keen powers of vision, geese and swans have keener; and we hoped that fortune would so far favour us as to bring some of the larger game within death-dealing distance of our double-barrels.

Having loaded our guns and completed our costumes, we left the shelter of the friendly trees; and what a wintry, shivery scene lay extended before us! The bay was margined with

ice, in parts extending out for miles, in other places open with innumerable air-holes.

We were, to a certain extent, successful in our selection of position, for a long and wide air-hole ran along the spit of land we had to traverse before we reached the point on which was the screen; and in this piece of open water were hundreds of ducks of at least a dozen different species. But they were not to be approached within shooting distance, so we toiled on through the deep snow, wistfully casting covetous glances at the brilliant-plumaged handsome crowd.

We had heard, during the latter portion of our drive, the deep whooping of swans; but now, on the far side of the air-hole, and about three hundred yards distant from us, were about forty of these handsome birds feeding, in all the consciousness of security. They were, indeed, a goodly sight to look at; one, I suppose, now-a-days never to be seen at home, and consequently not one that all of my countrymen have had the pleasure to gaze on. The sun had now risen, and its brilliant rays shone upon

their snowy backs and wings, while they either inertly rested on the ice, or dressed and plumed themselves on the water. How suitable, I could not help thinking, was such animal life, for the pure snow covered the landscape, and notwithstanding its being and looking so cold, there was a warm distant glow upon the horizon, doubtless caused by the reflection of prismatic light from the innumerable points of ice that had been cast up by the tideway along the margin of the open water.

If I do not obtain a shot the whole of this coming day, I shall be amply repaid for all my trouble by the view of this scene. I both thought and felt, and I am certain when I say so, that the majority of my friends will agree that it would have affected them in the same way. Scenes such as this are ever to be remembered, for they are the gems in the gallery of nature.

At length we arrived at the screen, which is simply a few yards of bushes set up on end, to hide from the sharp vision of the game anyone who may be behind. But, alas! our prospect was a dismal one in the extreme, for one plain

uninterrupted sheet of ice stretched from the screen to the opposite point, the distance of more than half a mile, over an arm of the sea which connected a land-locked bay with the Chesapeake.

While holding a council of war—for we had at once decided that no sport was to be obtained here—my companion seized me by the arm and pressed me down behind the screen, at the same time warning me in earnest language that the fowl were coming. Although I had seen nothing, I was quick, willing, and certainly glad to accept his word for it ; so I kept as close behind the intervening blind as it was possible for a rather tall and more than ordinarily stout man, with a considerable amount of military stiffness, to do. But I was not long detained in suspense—at the word of permission I sprang to my legs, and four barrels sent their contents into a party of fine canvas-back ducks, which were circling round, as if undecided whether to enter the inner bay or make along the sea-board side of the point.

Five of the beauties tumbled, all of which fell

upon the ice, which being very mushy (soft), we were obliged to remain without obtaining them, till our new acquaintance of this morning arrived with his retriever. This unexpected piece of luck caused us to come to the conclusion that we might do worse than remain here; so the decoys were undermined from a snow bank and set out upon the ice, after an immensity of labour, and no inconsiderable risk; for it was only through utilizing some planking which formed the flooring of a skiff tied up close by, on which to place our feet and to remove in front of us for each successive step, that we were able to hazard our weight upon the soft, dangerous ice.

Glad to get our labour safely performed, both took advantage of the screen; nor were we many minutes behind it when my friend again spied approaching game.

"Keep close," he muttered, *sotto voce*. "It's a black duck, the cunningest of the lot, and can smell or see your gun as far as a darned crow."

So we kept close, and were rewarded with a sufficiently near shot, which tumbled the inky

bird all of a heap among the decoys. For some time after we remained inactive, only having the gratification of seeing two of our canvas-backs, which were only cripples, making their way further from us, and nearer towards the open water, till at length they only appeared in the distance as specks so minute that it required no ordinary power of vision to distinguish them. I dislike to lose a wounded bird—every sportsman does, for it is certain, poor thing, to fall into the hands of some predatory bird or quadruped, possibly with means of terminating life so limited that the victim almost dies a second death ere it ceases to breathe.

We were soon joined, however, by our host of the morning, who was accompanied by his retriever, as good and sensible a dog as ever obeyed a master's bidding. He was a cross between the old-fashioned water-spaniel, and some kind of large rough terrier, so beauty of appearance was not part of his composition; but handsome is that handsome does. In a moment he was among the dead birds, but being ordered to seek, he paid no more attention to them than

to sniff at each, as if to satisfy himself that they were safe from causing him future trouble. Then, making a cast to windward, he struck the trail of one of the cripples, and at a long, low, quick, but cautious trot, ran the bird up in a few moments. On his return he sighted the other bird, and with the first in his mouth he pushed on in pursuit. This second cripple, however, was not so easy a capture as the first; but although the chase was long, the sagacious dog took care to keep himself between the quarry and the open water—thus cutting off its only chance of escape. Up to this, Watch had retained the first bird in his mouth; thus hampered, it was obvious he was unnecessarily prolonging the pursuit, so he dropped it, and soon afterwards captured the runaway, when he returned for his first prize, and with elastic step, as if conscious of having performed something worthy of praise, joined us, his whole face beaming with excitement and intelligence.

“That’s a pup worth having,” said its owner.

“You may say that,” added Sam.

“And what’s more,” added the first speaker,

"although I have owned him since he was a month old, I never laid a stick over his back."

I had liked this rough specimen of the *genus homo* previously, from his disinterested, thorough hospitality ; but after announcing that his means of educating his canine friends was without bringing the lash into use, he rose still higher in my estimation.

We had just secured all our birds, when a pongey (a fore-and-aft schooner, without bulwarks, and peculiar to the Chesapeake) came round Lighthouse Point, apparently intent on running up to Annapolis. If such were the case, and it continued to lay its present course, it almost amounted to a moral certainty that numbers of the wild-fowl sitting outside on the margin of the flow would be flushed, and probably some wing their way within shot of our ambushade. In this we were not disappointed ; but with the exception of a coterie of a dozen or so of red-heads, out of whom we bowled over six, the others passed too far off to justify our attempting to successfully stop their progress. From this time forth, although we patiently

waited, disregarding cold and wet, no more ducks put in an appearance; so we all determined to seek some other locality, promising a prospect of more sport.

About half a mile from us, and across the bay, there appeared to be an opening between two heavily-wooded points, through which we incessantly heard the loud, once known, never-to-be-forgotten call of swans; so after holding a council of war, we settled that we should make it our future scene of operations, although to reach it entailed a tramp of several miles. With the desire of losing as little as possible of the morning's shooting, we trudged backwards along the spit of sand, at the best pace we could command, through the soft and slushy snow. The wood where we had left the horse was all but regained, when our noses were greeted with such a decided and strong foxy smell, while the surface was so marked with their tracks, that I concluded at least a dozen of these long-tailed gentry had been having here a game at hide-and-seek, and that since we passed an hour previously. However,

Master Pug was too knowing to show himself, or give us an idea of the nature of his game of romps, so we passed on, I at least wishing I could have been a witness to his gambols.

At length it was decided we should try to cross the bottom of the bay on the ice, a proceeding I did not at all relish; but as this course would much shorten the distance, and was proposed, and as rapidly carried without remonstrance, I made up my mind to follow the example set me—no very unsafe proceeding, when it is stated that my companions each weighed a stone more than myself. The result was that without accident, although several times we were within an ace of having one, we reached the opposite shore. Trudging under the friendly shelter of the wood, we found the snow less deep, and again such numerous tracks of hares and partridges that, if we had been provided with suitable dogs, there is no doubt we should have been but a short time in filling our bags with such game.

At length we reached the termination of the timber; a few stunted alders intervened

between us and the water, beyond which, at about one hundred yards distant, was another projecting angle of land, also densely wooded. This strait—for such it literally is—was all open water, for it possessed a rapid current, and was about a quarter of a mile long, connecting the bay on which we had first shot with a large arm of the sea, known by the name of Fisherman's Creek. Nature or art could not have formed a place better adapted for wild-fowl shooting, for every bird that wished to pass from the one feeding ground to the other, unless disposed to top the trees—a very unusual occurrence, unless when they are rendered very wild by constant shooting—must pass within easy range of either point.

Seeing that this water was open, we expected sport; a few glances told us that we should not be disappointed, for in every direction, even on the small icebergs, rested wild-fowl. Sam was at my elbow, our companion on my other flank. Cautiously making a stalk through most favourable ground, upon a large flock of unsuspecting black-head ducks, the former uttered al-

most in a whisper, "Down for your life; here come swan, by Jingo!" And we did down, for true enough there they were, coming straight for us, about a dozen beauties, flying in the figure of an acute angle. So admirably were we concealed, that they would doubtless have passed directly over our heads; but my impatience was too great to be controlled—the more blameable as I was not a novice in field-sports; so moving my limbs to be the better able to spring to my feet, the motion caught the leader's quick eye, while they were yet sixty yards off, and in an instant he, followed by all his companions, commenced sky-rocketing. No time was lost in giving them a volley, and our heavy shot at this long range brought down three birds. One fell on land—it was dead; the remaining two, which had each a wing broken close to the shoulder, as they plumped down upon the water, made a splash as large as a duffing diver is often seen to make when, instead of reaching the water head first, he does so spread out like an animated representative of the two-headed eagle of Austria.

By-the-by, this excessively curious double-headed aristocratic bird invariably reminds me of a very common ordinary specimen that had gone through the process of being mangled.

Without difficulty we secured our prizes, each of which I should judge weighed about thirty pounds; and as they were without a tubercle on the bill, and pronounced to be trumpeters by my companions, I accepted their opinion as correct. These magnificent birds only visit the Chesapeake in severe protracted Winters, remaining no longer than necessity compels; for accompanied by the wild-geese, as soon as a break occurs in the weather indicating the approach of Spring, they immediately return northwards, working their way along the coast, till they reach as high latitudes often as the Arctic Circle, where they bred, they and their young remaining in those inhospitable regions until the frost king next season has firmly sealed with ice every foot of open water.

The reports of our guns having driven the smaller game away, we were detained some time without a shot. At length a pheasant or sprig-

tailed duck came past, at which Sam made a very clean and long shot. However, the bird did not fall till it had gone out over the ice-bound bay several hundred yards. As our companion had gone off with his retriever to another open piece of water, we were compelled to leave our game where it dropped till his return; but this delay gave me an opportunity of observing the character of two different species of birds, which to me at least was full of interest. The poor sprig-tailed duck, when it fell upon the ice, at first struggled a great deal, but its strength failing, its efforts to fly or walk gradually ceased, and the poor victim lay apparently dead. It might have been in this inert state ten minutes, when two crows hovered over it, gradually lowering themselves, till at last they pitched upon the ice some yards from their intended prey, where they evidently held a consultation. This resulted in a decision to have a closer view; so both advanced slowly a foot or two, then halting a second time they put their heads together, which resulted in the crows separating, and each approaching the still motionless bird from

the reverse sides. By degrees they came closer and closer, twisting their heads first on one side and then on the other, in that knowing manner usually attributed to magpies when looking into a marrow bone. Apparently being satisfied that they had nothing to fear, the most courageous of the two sable-coated gentry ventured so far as to give the duck a peck; this raised the unfortunate bird's latent energy, so as to cause it to renew its struggles, which so alarmed the crows that they made a hurried retreat on foot in opposite directions, not halting till they had attained what they considered a safe distance, when they both faced to the right about, severed by a distance of about eight yards, with the wounded bird between them. Again the duck had ceased to struggle, and a second orderly approach commenced, till they were within a few inches of the object of their curiosity, when once more they halted to have a consultation.

Who does not remember the charming story of childhood, "Cock-Robin?" In some illustrated editions of this popular narrative, I re-

member seeing a brilliantly-coloured plate of the rook, habited as a parson, reading from his book the funeral service. The staid, butter-wouldn't-melt-in-your-mouth air usually adopted in your strictly orthodox preacher was here admirably portrayed by the artist; but in the scene before me it was so burlesqued by these two crows that I fairly laughed outright.

Handing my small field-glass to Sam, I requested his opinion of the scene. After looking for some moments, he relieved his mouth of his quid of tobacco and expectorated. This, I knew, was the prelude to something original.

"Cap, I ain't a judge of human natur', if it bean't as like as beans to two devil-dodgers" (his ordinary terms for clergymen) "about to do the dust to dust business."

But the actions of the crows had been marked by a powerful and bold marauder, who swept down upon the scene with the velocity of an arrow. On hurried wings, and doubtless half frightened to death, the crows retreated towards the woods, waking the echoes with their harsh, barking notes; but they had nought

to fear from the new-comer, for all his attention was fixed upon the unfortunate duck. As if to try his powers, the white-headed eagle made several false swoops over his prey, then one in reality, when he snatched the wounded bird off the ice, and carrying it with the apparent ease that a cat would a mouse, bore his prey several hundred yards to a point not far distant from us, still considerably beyond range of our guns, when in a few minutes he had torn the carcass to pieces, and devoured all save a few of the larger feathers.

"By Jupiter! ain't that a thieving scoundrel!" said Sam.

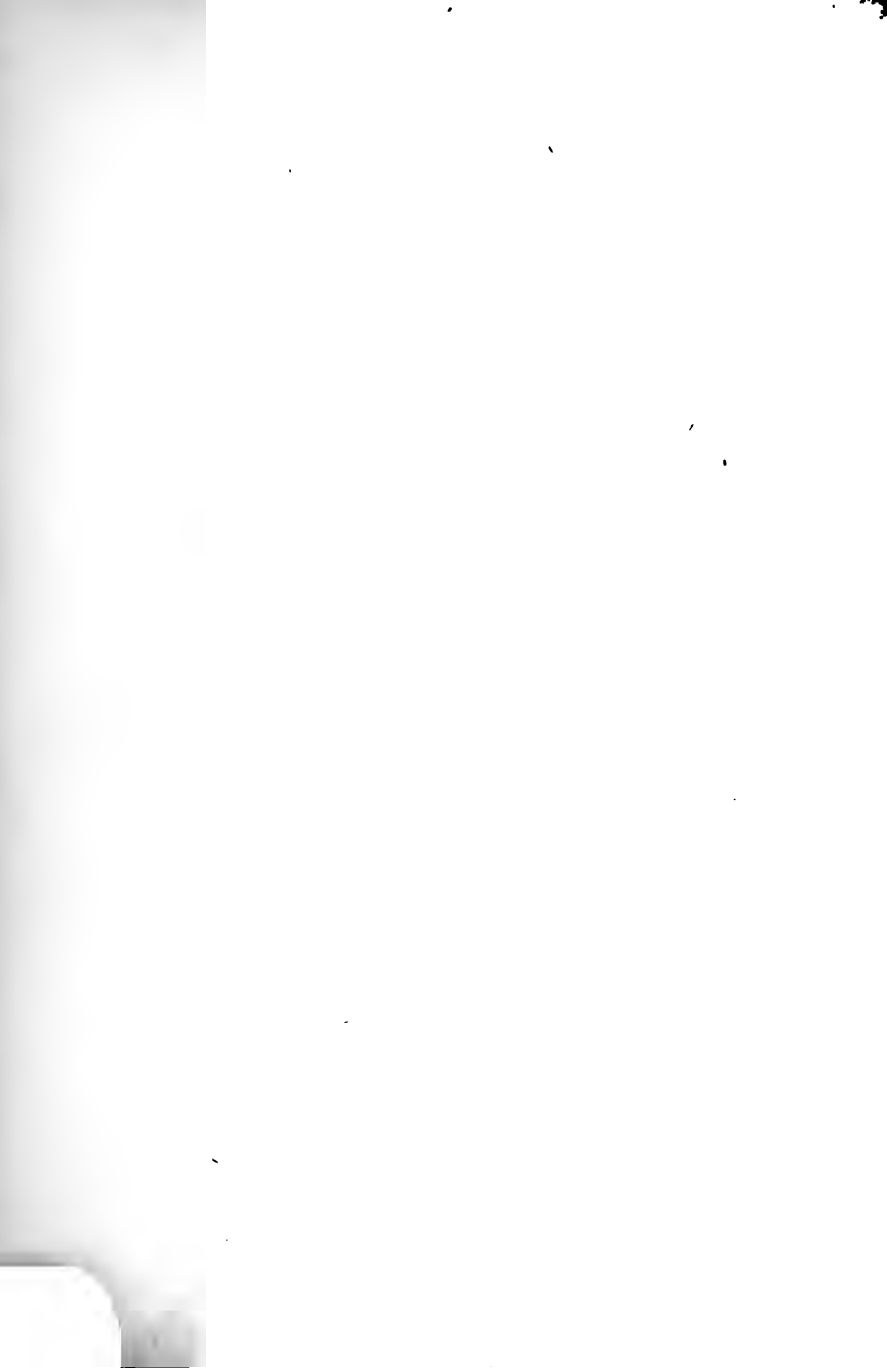
"You must make some allowance—he's your national emblem," replied I.

"It's a fact, Cap; he's a true Yankee—a regular down-easter; and to prove that I'm right, just see how scary the cuss is!" On which Sam let fly at the eagle, although the distance was double that at which any gun could kill; but the shot caused the bird precipitously to wing its way off to where it could make fresh depredations free from interruption.

It is almost needless to add that Sam was an uncompromising Southerner, and hated a Yankee worse than snakes, as he used to express it. However, my friend is not singular in his dislike to the white-headed or bald eagle; even Dr. Benjamin Franklin objected strongly to its being adopted as the emblem of his country, on account of its being ferocious, overbearing, and tyrannical, and, worse than all, a robber who never hesitates to appropriate, when opportunity offers, the prey obtained by the exertions of others; but the whole falcon race might be objected to on the same score. The lion, the emblem of my own country, if justice were done him, deserves to bear no better character.

CHAPTER IX.

FOXES—A RED-HAIRED STYREN—PROSPECTS OF SPORT IN TANGIER SOUND—A SEVERE TRUDGE FOR A DAY'S SPORT—AN AMERICAN FOREST AT SUNRISE—BAD MARKSMANSHIP—DIPPER DUCKS BAGGED—SAM'S SHOT WITH HIS EIGHT-BORE GUN—DISABLED SPORTSMEN—WHIPPING AN ENEMY AND PAYING THE DOCTOR—APPEARANCE OF THE STEAMER—A WILD-GOOSE CHASE.



CHAPTER IX.

THE day was now getting too far advanced for us to do more shooting without setting out decoys, and as they were some distance off, and no boat available, we determined to return to town.

While gathering together the spoils and our various traps, preparatory to starting, Sam called my attention to something on the ice, but so far off across the bay that it took me some time ere I could distinguish it. At length I got my glass to bear upon it, and discovered it to be a fox heading directly for our position. At a slow but careless pace the animal came out from the opposite shore several hundred yards, and then sat down, after the manner of our domestic pets of the same genus. By the

beast's manner, it appeared to me that it expected to be joined by a companion ; nor was I mistaken, for soon afterwards a much larger fox came bounding over the snow, and joined the first. From their manner and gambols with each other, it immediately became apparent that sweet-hearting was their object, if the tender attentions of the male and the indifferent, volatile conduct of the female are to be accepted as criteria ; but the lovers were not long left alone, for first one, then two other suitors put in an appearance, and endeavoured to carry off the lady, by assuming every graceful attitude or seductive movement of which they had a knowledge.

The adage of faint heart not gaining fair lady was here verified. The first gentleman in the field was evidently the most powerful or courageous, for his rivals kept a respectful distance from him, even at times hurriedly retreating when he faced towards them. At length the lady, whisking her handsome brush, came bounding towards us, followed by the whole cortége, the gentlemen bringing up the rear,

evidently not being in the sweetest of tempers with each other. Again the vixen stopped, and had a game of romps, evidently willing to flirt with all; but so jealously was she guarded by her first attendant that her intentions were promptly frustrated by his interference. I am afraid, poor fellow, that, like many another gallant, he had an anxious time—one moment his heart gnawed with jealousy, at another wearied to distraction by the excessive attentions demanded by the red-haired syren. Again the fickle one darted over the snow, throwing it about in wanton sport, but, changing her course, made for a point about two hundred yards below our situation.

Having lived in a hunting country for years, I have a holy horror of shooting a fox; but in spite of my remonstrances, Sam went off at his best pace to intercept the arrival of the coterie. In a quarter of an hour afterwards I heard the well-known report of his gun, and as it seldom spoke but as the herald of death, I was not surprised, when he joined me, to find that he had knocked over the old dog—at least, so we supposed, from

its aged appearance, and the numerous wounds that scarred its hide. Poor old fellow, it was an abrupt and unexpected removal out of the way of his rivals.

Thus terminated that day at Tallis Point, and although on many occasions I have killed more game, still I had seldom better enjoyed myself. Next night it froze more severely than ever, closing all the open water in this vicinity. So if the weather continues as it has been, and I wish more sport, I must go further to the south. All those persons with whom I have had conversations on the subject agree that if I went a hundred miles down the bay I should be more than rewarded for my trouble. So to move I am determined, for although Annapolis is a very attractive old city, I find it rather slow as a residence, if no field-sports are to be enjoyed in the neighbourhood.

The frost has continued so excessively severe, that the wild-fowl have been driven from their feeding-grounds at the top of Chesapeake Bay, and Susquehannah Flats, down to those inlets and sounds less land-locked, and more

affected by the rise and fall of the tide. And, if report speaks true, the quantity of ducks and geese at present assembled in Tangier Sound, as well as in Hooper and Holland Straits, promises the sportsman who shall find his way to those localities no end of sport. The only drawback, however, that I can find to such an excursion, and it will be acknowledged to be rather a formidable one, is that, from the neighbourhood being nearly all marsh, and consequently very scantily settled, there is scarcely a possibility of finding a suitable place to put up at. Still, after coming so far for sport, and being so near where it can be obtained to perfection, I am too ardent, and too long accustomed to rough it, to permit such drawbacks to stand in my way, so I made up my mind to avail myself of the first opportunity to get to the desired locality.

After repeated inquiries, and almost despairing of being able to obtain means of transport, I learned that the oyster-police steamboat sailed on the morrow for Crisfield, and the neighbouring fisheries; and as I was acquainted with

the senior officer of the force, I forthwith interviewed him, and happily with successful results.

That evening, after much difficult navigation among the floating ice, I succeeded in getting my traps on board the steamboat; but as she did not sail till after midday on the morrow, I arranged that she should pick me up at a point ten or twelve miles down the bay, and in the immediate vicinity of Fisherman's Creek, where some large air-holes were reported to exist, and which had been swarming with wild-fowl for some previous days.

Having retired early and obtained a good night's rest, when the black waiter awoke me an hour before daylight, I felt so rejuvenated and ready for my work that, disregarding the cold and the inconveniences inseparable from leaving bed at such untimely hours, I was dressed and ready for the road in the shortest credible space of time. Sam, the keenest and truest of sportsmen, was at the hall-door punctually to the moment appointed; so I tumbled in alongside of him, and we started, full of the

greatest hopes and anticipations. Even the boy who accompanied us appeared to participate in our buoyant feelings, for every now and again he would carol forth snatches of negro melodies, or beat time to some well-known air with his hands on the back-board of the light waggon.

The road was in better order than when I had previously travelled it, so we got rapidly along, the good old horse requiring neither whip nor word of encouragement to use his best endeavours to take us to our destination as rapidly as lay in his power; so ere the sun rose we had dispensed with his services, and were trudging manfully along to the point from which we intended shooting. But the tramp was a severe one, for the ground was not only extremely uneven, but in places our route led through rough woodland densely covered with brush and tree-tops, the whole in parts choked with heavy drifts of snow, which appeared to be specially placed there for the purpose of hiding either a quicksand or a morass. Moreover, I was over-loaded, having on my back not only

a large supply of ammunition and provender, but several odds and ends that in the hurry of packing I had forgotten to send on board the boat with the rest of my baggage.

At length the sun commenced to show himself, and to light the trees up with his brilliant rays. I know few scenes more bright and cheerful than an American forest at sunrise, when the earth is covered with snow. Every object stands forth so distinctly, every limb is so clearly and sharply defined, while the light is far from harsh or glaring; moreover, the birds and animals bustle about as if rejoiced that darkness is over, and a long term of daylight is in prospect. Besides, animated creatures at such early hours seem to have more trust in man's good intentions towards them, and consequently are far tamer and more confiding. Several little busy bluecaps sat chirping their morning song, so thoroughly disregarding our approach that I might almost have poked some of them with the muzzle of my gun, ere they thought proper to remove to another perch.

Evidences of hares and partridges we saw in

abundance, but of these we took no notice, as we desired to lose as little time as possible in reaching our destination. Moreover, we were so encumbered with our respective loads that it would have been impossible to shoot without removing them. I never previously felt the fatigue of a tramp so much, and many times would have asked Sam, who led the way, to favour me by a short halt, but dislike to being considered a non-stayer, or a feather-bed sportsman, caused me to defer such a course as long as I possibly could.

At length my companion of his own accord stopped till I overtook him; it was on a ledge of open ground, which was traversed by a dry water-course, sparsely covered with briers and long grass. Behind a partially decomposed log he pointed out a hare, whose large eyes were watching us intently; doubtless the poor creature hoped that we would pass on without discovering it.

"Now for a shot!" says Sam.

I knew I was far too blown to hit a haystack, and so would have requested him to leave pussy alone, but it was too late. He

kicked her up out of her hiding-place, I fired both barrels, so did my companion, and after the smoke had drifted away, I still saw Mr. Long-ears going for bare life as fast as his limbs could carry him. Each simultaneously turned and looked at the other, doubtless with the intention of fabricating some excuse for such bad workmanship, or laying the blame on the other for not having bagged the game, but the performance of both was so glaringly bad, that each looked more or less ashamed; and I suppose it was so indicated in our features, for we both laughed aloud till the still morning scene was wakened by the reverberating echoes of our mirth.

Ten minutes after this episode, we reached the point, and found an abundance of open water; but although there was plenty of the smaller varieties of duck, none of the better and larger description were to be seen. Nought discouraged, we went in for what we could obtain, hoping that the advance of day would send some canvas-backs down from other feeding places. In half an hour we had bagged

several dippers southerlies, and an unfortunate old goose, whose appearance indicated him to be a veteran in the pure and unadulterated sense of the word. These dippers are beautiful birds, about the size of teal, very strong on the wing, swift in flight, and easily brought up to decoys—in fact, seldom wild, even when flying round points where shooting is going on. They are, moreover, excellent for the table, ranking in this respect almost equal to the canvas-back and red-head.

At length several flocks of the larger species of ducks came past, but all were flying too high for ordinary shot to reach them; but Sam had in his pocket some buck-shot, so the next time he discharged his ponderous eight-bore gun, he loaded her with a couple of drams more powder, and two ounces of these heavy projectiles. Scarcely had he capped when a flight of over a dozen canvas-backs swept past—oh! so high! The height I will not give, for I shall most certainly be disbelieved. The ponderous double-barrel was pitched to his shoulder—I heard him say something about holding six foot

in front of them, a report almost as loud as a field-gun took place—and two ducks came head-long down to the earth, where Sam has also been sent by the tremendous power of the recoil of his gun. The result, as far as my companion was concerned, was exactly what I expected, though he was as stalwart and lusty a fellow as ever pulled a trigger; but *experientia docet* many aver, it did not in Sam's case, for he preferred the knock-down to not getting game. But if his shooting-iron, which is none of the best in material and finish, does not some day burst, then I am a false prophet.

It is really sad to see, in various parts of this state, fine-built, able persons, who have been keen sportsmen, minus arms or hands, or fearfully scarred across the face from the bursting of some cheap Brummagem gun, the manufacturer and vendor of which should be hanged on a gibbet as high as Haman's. However, I trust such a mishap will never happen to Sam, for a better-hearted, more genuine, true, hospitable fellow never breathed, who would go to the end of the earth to serve a friend, and almost as

far to fight an enemy. Report says he did once go a long way to whip one, and after doing it to his satisfaction, lent him the contents of his purse to pay the doctor; also gave him his revolver as a present, to enable the vanquished to resist in future similar treatment. Yes, old friend, I have seen it blow hard, and have been in many a rough scrimmage, and I would sooner be at your elbow while you held the tiller, or have you at my elbow when a free fight was on the *tapis*, than any man I ever met.

The day was now getting so far advanced, that we commenced to have grave suspicions that the commander of the steamboat had forgotten his appointment, or made a mistake in reference to the place of rendezvous. Ice could not have been the cause of detention, for sundry tow-boats and ocean steamers had passed in the distance, awaking the echoes of the still woods with the grunting of their high-pressure engines, or the grating, hammering noise produced by their stems coming in contact with the ice. But as there were two or

three residences within a few miles, this would have caused us no more serious difficulty than the loss of a day or two. Ducks for some time had ceased to fly, and we were holding a council of war as to our next steps, when suddenly several small flights of wild-fowl came in sight, followed rapidly by others, affording us a quarter of an hour's good sport, and well pleased as we were with this, we were still further delighted when we found that they had been driven from their feeding-place by our craft, which had, unperceived, come round the back of the well-timbered island situated in front of our shooting point.

However, our trouble was not yet at an end, for we had the greatest difficulty in embarking from the immense quantities of sheet ice that everywhere margined the shore. Again and again the boat's crew sent to take us off attempted to force an opening, and although provided with axes, boat-hooks, and hammers, they were ultimately forced to desist, though the ice was rotten that margined the banks, and every trial we made to get to them was futile.

At length the boat returned to the steamer, and immediately afterwards returned, accompanied by a flat-bottomed punt. This was run up on the ice, and the sailors, taking it firmly by the gunwale, trotted over the floe till they arrived opposite our stand, when a few strong shoves of the boat-hook shot it to our feet.

As the sailors, muffled up in their great-coats, and their hands covered with woollen mittens, crossed the wide expanse of field-ice, the scene reminded me much of pictures describing the life of some of our exploring parties in high latitudes.

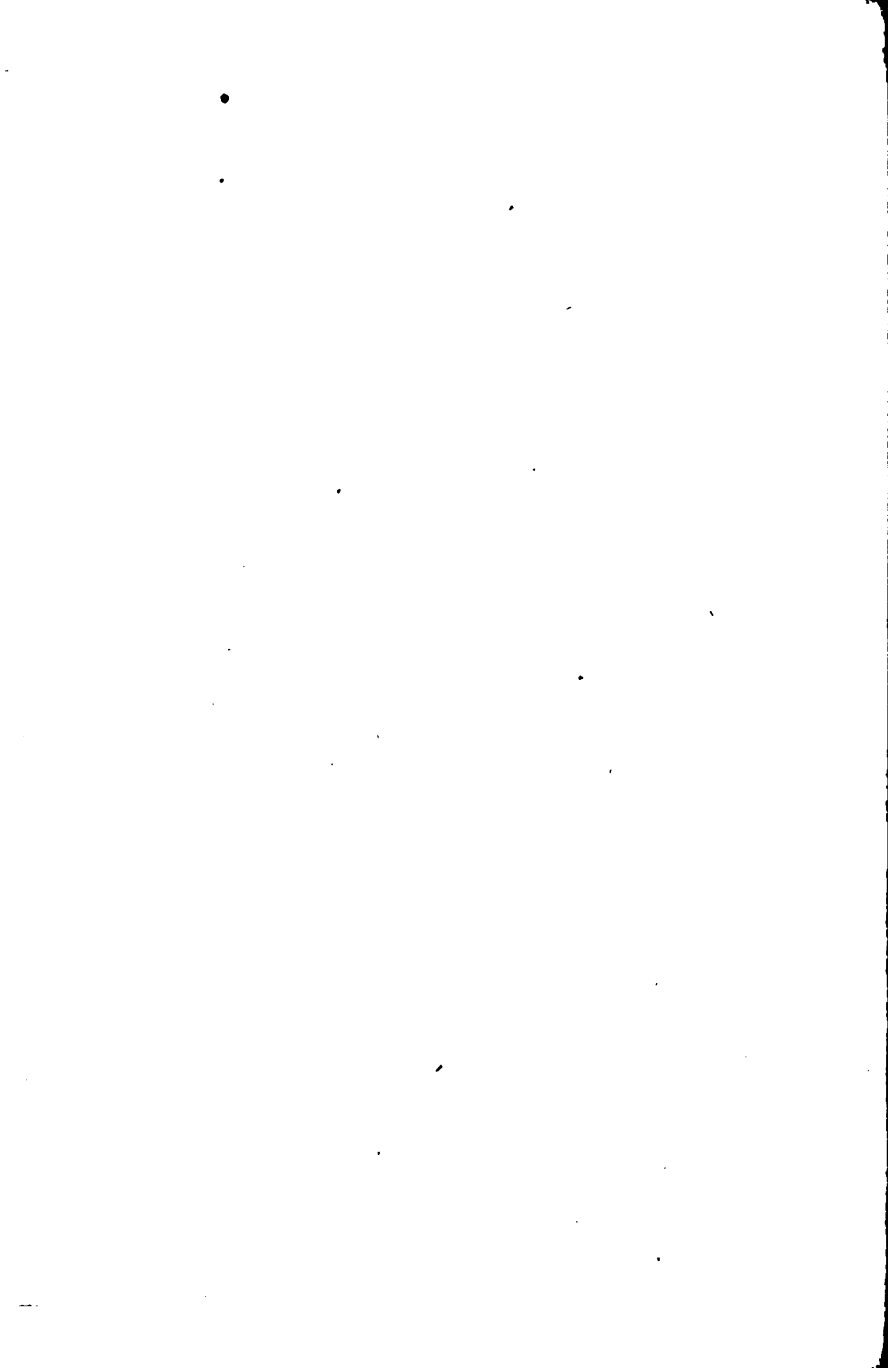
After a great deal of hard poling and shoving, and several narrow escapes from a sea-bath, we got safely on board, where we found an excellent dinner awaiting our arrival. To this meal we had scarcely sat down when one of the crew came into the cabin to impart the information that the ice in front of us was covered with wild geese. The temptation of killing some of these noble birds outweighed the attractions of gratifying our appetites, for soon host as well as guests were assembled in the bow, gun in hand,

ready to deal destruction to any unfortunate who should be confiding enough to permit us to come within range. The sight at this time was certainly novel, and, at the same time, most interesting to either the sportsman or naturalist. The surface of the smooth unrippled sea was covered with diminutive icebergs, from one to several yards in length, and frequently rising to an elevation of several feet, while the outlines of the bergs were as various and picturesque as they were numerous; and perched on these, apparently perfectly unconscious of the vicinity of the steamship, trimming their feathers, or splashing and bathing themselves in the water, were hundreds of wild geese. The sun was at this time almost touching the horizon, and as it dipped behind us in all the gorgeous beauty of the sunsets peculiar to this locality, the dark feathers of the birds reflected innumerable metallic lights. Our craft had her steam now shut off, and rapidly and smoothly glided on with the impetus of her former motion till we were within forty yards of our quarry, which, as if by a pre-concocted signal, took wing at the same

moment. But it was too late for them to go off scathless, for half a dozen well-directed barrels brought down an equal number of birds.

Only two, however, were shot dead, and the chase that ensued after the cripples was as amusing as exciting. How cleverly the birds eluded the blow of oars and stretchers aimed at them—how each boat was nearly upset in the excitement of the moment, were sources of pleasure that made lookers-on and participants shriek with laughter.

At length all were secured, except an old gander, who baffled every attempt at his capture, although he had the two boats for over a quarter of an hour in his pursuit; and ultimately he would doubtless have succeeded in getting off, but that one of the boats returned for a gun. I volunteered to become gunner, and turned the veteran on his back at the first shot from my breech-loader, although the distance exceeded fifty yards.



CHAPTER X.

A GOOD BOAT AND EFFICIENT CREW—AMERICAN RESPECT FOR
THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND AND PRINCE OF WALES—AFFEC-
TION OF THE SOUTH FOR THE OLD COUNTRY—THE ALA-
BAMA CLAIMS—POLTROONERY OF RECENT ENGLISH GO-
VERNMENTS—SCENE IN CHESAPEAKE BAY—SOLOMON'S
ISLAND—THE OYSTER-PACKING TRADE—DESCRIPTION OF
MR. SOLOMON'S ESTABLISHMENT—DRUM POINT.

CHAPTER X.

NIGHT was closing in rapidly, so the boats were hooked to the davits, and rapidly swung on deck. Our stem was pointed for Drum Point, at the mouth of the Pautuxent river, distant some five or six hours' sail. Everything on board was fitted up with a view to comfort, and it was really surprising how much room there existed in so small a craft. I may here note, that I never saw a more active, efficient crew, and yet none of them, I believe, with the exception of the officers, exceeded twenty years of age. They were, moreover, most obliging and civil, always ready to do anything in their power to serve me, more especially if it were to assist me in obtaining sport.

The vessel's course having been set, and the

night being so clear and bright that miles on either side could be seen, the officers not on duty joined me in the cabin, and we played that excellent American game of cards, "eucré," till Drum Point was reported near, when we turned out to see the anchor dropped. Duty being over, we returned to the cabin to discuss numerous glasses of excellent whisky punch, discourse about old times, and recall foreign scenes.

Nearly all of the officers of this staunch little vessel had served in the cause of the South during the late war, and if our good little Queen had possibly been able to take a peep at the inmates of this cabin, and to see what took place inside its limited bulkheads, she would have been surprised, not only to see her health several times drunk, but that done with full honours. Nor did the officers stop in loyalty here, for could the Prince of Wales (who had only a week or two previously been reported out of danger from his late serious illness) have heard the echoes of the Pautuxent and Chesapeake disturbed with the energetic, manly voices that toasted him, and wished him long life, he would

scarcely have believed that American and not English lungs were the motive cause.

It is not the policy of our Government now-a-days to add to our immense possessions and responsibilities, to conquer lands or annex them, or, I even fear, to propitiate other nationalities by kindnesses; but if we had only given this Southern people aid and countenance in the days of their affliction, we should have received in return the devotion and love of an honourable, high-toned, and naturally conservative race, who would have remained true to us till the end of time. Even if self—that overruling being that controls so many of our actions—had been consulted, we would have done wisely in gaining the good-will of the inhabitants of the Southern States; for in return we should have had consigned to us every pound of cotton grown on their soil, every bushel of rice, or hundred-weight of tobacco raised upon their homesteads, and British ships would have invariably been employed to transport this western wealth to our shores. *Sed revocare gradus*, the deed is done, how useless is

it, then, to cry over the past ; but before leaving the subject, one word about the Alabama Claims. They were a subject frequently discussed by me with persons occupying every position in the society of this neighbourhood, and there was but one opinion among the intelligent inhabitants of Maryland—and it must be remembered that all here are politicians, whether they be owners of thousands of acres, or obtain their support by despoiling the sea or rivers of their inhabitants—that the grand error which we Englishmen made was in acknowledging that our conduct during the war was wrong, or in the slightest iota contrary to international law. In this I fully concur, for if we had not done so, there would not have been afforded an opportunity for letting the edge of the wedge of grievance get an entrance, which has ultimately been pounded on the head, till no course was left but to call out *peccavi* ! and pay a pecuniary indemnity to prevent further litigation.

There was a time when England would show her teeth, and use them too, sooner than be imposed upon ; nor were we, in those days, less

respected by the outer world than now; but those times have passed—may we hope that the present policy will turn out as advantageous to Britain as its supporters predict, and doubtless expect. But what can an old military man know about politics? I almost imagine I hear asked. Thus much, that our wanderings about the world give us enlarged views; that our profession makes us patriotic; that few of our cloth are prejudiced by sordid motives, and so, being free from prejudice, are enabled to use our judgment without having inducements to cause us to swerve from what experience tells us to be correct.

The Americans are essentially an early people; it is to be regretted that we are not more so. Thus all were on deck before the sun rose. Our anchorage was a lovely spot. To the eastward stretched the calm blue Chesapeake; to the north, and within short distance, stood forth the bold picturesque, wooded headland of Drum Point; and to the westward the magnificent estuary forming the mouth of Pautuxent River, whose shores were covered with fertile fields or luxuriant

woodlands. And what a perfect calm and repose lay upon the scene!—not a breath of wind floated through the air, and the sole noise that woke the stillness was the occasional voice of the fisherman shaking out the damp sails of his clipper, rakish-looking pongey to the drying influences of the sun's rays; or the quack, quack, quack of the numerous ducks that floated round in conscious security.

At length the word is passed forward, the smart crew seize hold of the capstan bars, and to their mellow voices and regular tramp our trim little craft is forced forward, till the anchor trips, the fluke of which is in a moment after secured and lashed; and under a half head of steam we slowly progress against the river's current—Solomon's Island, about two miles up the Pautuxent, being our destination. In half an hour we are abreast of it, in a perfectly land-locked bay, surrounded on all sides by homesteads, picturesque in their quaintness and antiquity, surrounded by fields, orchards, and woods—the *tout-ensemble* plainly telling of peace and plenty.

Our stay here is expected to extend over several hours, so the engineer, and one or two other officers of the ship, leave in the long boat with guns, decoy ducks, and other shooting paraphernalia, to occupy their spare time by adding to our larder. In a few minutes each sportsman has selected his stand, and has his stool ducks distributed; and before many more minutes have flitted into the past, the sharp reports of their guns proclaim that they are enjoying their favourite pastime.

The commanding officer has kindly volunteered to take me on shore with him, and introduce me to the proprietor of the island, as well as give me an opportunity of seeing and learning something of the business to whose interest it is devoted. But I am hurrying too fast, so I will cast back, that what I am about to state may be more intelligible to the reader.

A few years ago this island was uninhabited, now it contains a population of several hundred persons.

This change has been brought about through the shrewdness and business tact of a Mr. Solo-

mon, who saw, from the situation of this little spot, which is in the centre of one of the principal Maryland oyster-fisheries, that it could be most advantageously used for a depôt of supplies for the eastern and other markets. He consequently purchased it, built residences and store-houses, imported a host of employés, and soon made what was once an uncultivated waste echo with the hum of traffic and commerce.

Each succeeding year added to the prosperity of Mr. Solomon's purchase, so that, instead of remaining satisfied with the home trade, he went into packing for other markets, on a truly gigantic scale; and oysters put up at his establishment are to be found for sale wherever the English language is spoken. Well, we landed upon a beach of oyster shells; the shores of the island as far as we could see was composed entirely of them. Terraces, landing places, and docks were built out of them, and I was assured that at least one-third of the island had been recovered from the sea by unceasing dumping of the *débris* oyster shells around its margin; and this was done after such a systematic, well-conceiv-

ed plan that the shoal water was filled up so that the fishing crafts could run right alongside, and unload their valuable freight without the inconvenience that previously existed in transshipment. Labour everywhere is money; here, where it is excessively high, a saving of it is most important, and a schooner can now unload in a few hours, when formerly it took quadruple the time.

I have just shown how the *débris* is utilized; and not only is this done, but the greatest regard is also paid to appearances, and when all is completed that the proprietor intends to perform, there will not be a prettier spot on the Atlantic sea-board. On the beach we were met by one of the proprietor's sons, who extended to us the hospitable hearty welcome always to be expected from a Southern. With him we first went to the office where the accounts were kept and *employés* paid. The book-keeper, a most gentlemanly person, explained the whole routine, and the internal economy appeared to me, non-business person as I am, perfect. I learned that with few exceptions the work-

people were paid by piece-work—that is, when they performed a certain amount of labour, they received a cheque denoting so much money, and all were redeemed in cash on Saturday.

From the office we then proceeded to the store, an immense building, stocked with such an abundant and variously-assorted supply of goods that even the wants of the most fastidious tastes could be gratified; and I am glad to add that the prices charged were as reasonable as the commodities were excellent in quality. From thence we proceeded to the steaming-house, a large barn-like building—I should imagine quite one hundred and fifty feet long, by one-third in width. Ranged from end to end, abutting on each other, were five or six rows of tanks, capable of holding about a couple of tons of oysters. The tops of these are closed by air-tight covers, which are kept down when the shell-fish are being steamed; the immense boilers, machinery, and apparatus requisite for the purpose being underneath the floor; where are also situated several lines of tramway, to carry off the shells. As soon as the requisite

amount of steam has been employed, the covers are raised, and the oysters are removed from their shells, the former being placed in large measures; the latter dropped through the floor into the trucks beneath, placed there ready to receive them. The oysters are then submitted to an additional steaming process, which is a secret, and consequently was not revealed; after which they are packed in hermetically-sealed tins, in which state they go to market.

From the steaming-house we found our way to the building in which the tins were made. At the entrance, and under cover, were to be seen tons and tons of this useful and valuable metal. Passing through this store-room, we went into the workshop, where there were about two dozen clean, respectable mechanics at work. The machinery to economise labour was also here to be found, every part of the cans being cut out by pressure, and in such a rapid manner as almost to create astonishment. These different parts were borne to the workmen's benches by boys in attendance, and there soldered together with the greatest quickness

and precision. In fact, a block of tin, in almost an impossibly brief time, was turned out a perfectly-finished, air-tight can. From here we went to several of the cottages, all equally clean and comfortable, and nearly all swarming with children, the youngest of whom—provided not less than nine or ten years—can make their three or even more dollars a week. The juvenile population was so numerous, particularly for America, that it excited my surprise; I consequently asked for an explanation; to my astonishment, it was attributed to the oysters.

The bodily-comfort of the people was not only attended to, but also the spiritual, for a nice little church was shown me—and, better than all, open to all denominations of preachers. Lastly, the ship-building yard attracted my attention. On the slips were two vessels—one for repairs, the other new and almost ready for launching. She was a schooner, of that peculiar but most handy rig called here a pongey, and her hull was such a perfect model that she would have done credit to any yacht-owner. In measurement, I think, according to our standard, she

would have been considered about thirty tons; but I was informed by Mr. Solomon that she was exactly twenty-two, by American measurement, and that her cost, when ready for sea—sails, and every fitting included—would be about two thousand dollars, or, according to present rates of exchange, a little under four hundred pounds sterling.

After refusing a most pressing invitation to dinner, we went on board. Immediately afterwards our anchor was tripped, and we steamed past the east end of Solomon's Island, across the Pautuxent, possibly a distance of a mile and a half, to see Mr. Solomon's homestead. This is situated on the main land, and for beauty of situation could not be excelled. As our time was limited we did not land, but I satisfied myself by scanning the residence, barns, out-offices, ground, and gardens, through a powerful field-glass; and the result is, that I can confidently assert that it is a property so admirably kept, and tastefully laid out, that any English gentleman might be proud of its possession. I was further told that the stock upon this estate was

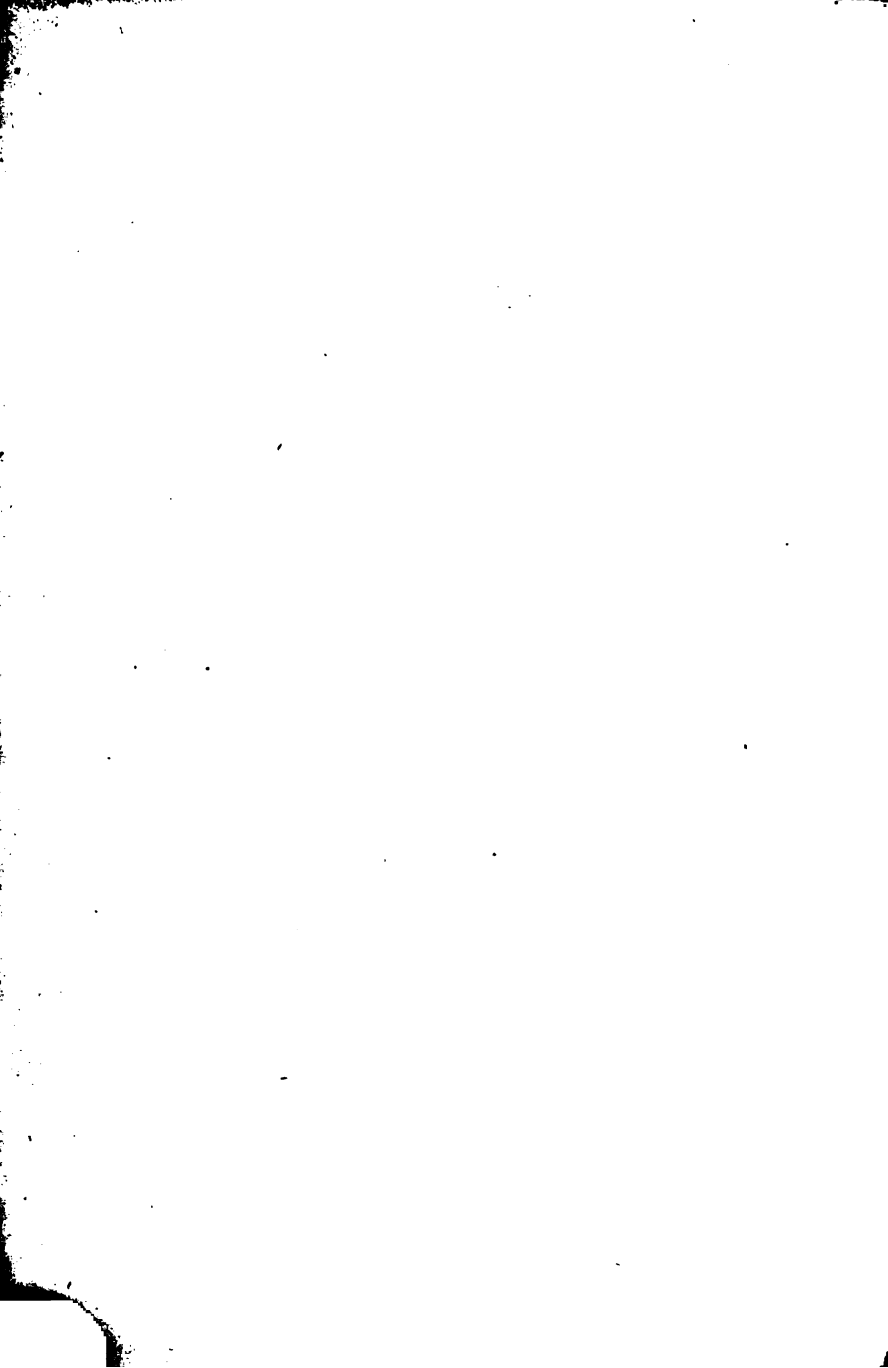
unrivalled in the country; that immense sums had been spent for the purest breeds that could be obtained of horses, horned cattle, sheep, and pigs; and that a number of the progenitors of his various breeds had been imported from some of the most celebrated stock-farms in England.

Again our tight little steam-vessel's head was turned to the Chesapeake; soon Drum Point loomed over our left, looking radiant in the noon-day sun, from the brilliancy of the semi-withered, still gorgeous American foliage. This place is destined at no distant date to become a place of great importance, for already a subsidy has been granted, and operations commenced to make it the termination of a line of railroad from Baltimore, which will open up an entirely new section of rich agricultural country. But this is not the only advantage which I crave for Drum Point, that is to aid in forming its future greatness.

The upper portions of the Chesapeake are very shallow. Baltimore, for deep draft vessels, is frequently difficult to obtain access to, but Drum Point possesses deep water right up to

its shores, with admirable holding-ground, capital shelter, and room sufficient for the navies of nations to ride without interfering with each other. Among a shrewd people like the Americans these desideratums for forming the future scene of a great emporium of commerce have not been overlooked, and land in this vicinity has risen a great deal over its former value, and cottages, villas, and business houses are to be seen in every stage of construction.

It is rumoured, even thus early, that those splendid steam-vessels belonging to the German Lloyd's Company, that ply between Baltimore, Southampton, and Bremen Haven, are going to make Drum Point their American port; and this is scarcely to be wondered at, when I state that it is seldom one of the noble craft belonging to this enterprising and should be most popular company, when outward-bound, does not get fast on the mud-banks that interfere with the approach to sea, a few miles after leaving their docks at Locust Point.



CHAPTER XI.

AMERICAN OYSTERS—LIGHT-HOUSE IN HOLLAND STRAITS—A
LIVING MASS OF WILD GEESE—HOLLAND STRAITS—PRO
SPECT OF A GOOD DAY'S SHOOTING—FANTASTICAL DREAM
—AN INVITATION WHICH NEEDED NO PRESSING—TURTLE
EGG ISLAND—A LANDING EFFECTED—METHOD OF SHOOT-
ING WILD-FOWL—BALD PATES, OR AMERICAN WIDGEON—
UNPLEASANT POSITION.



CHAPTER XI.

DRUM POINT, with all its attractions, is fading in the distance ; we are on the broad Chesapeake, and although astern land can be distinguished, before us our limits of vision are confined by a sea horizon. In fact, one might as well be on the swelling bosom of the ever-heaving Atlantic Ocean. With the increased depth of water all the wild-fowl have disappeared, and little remains to interest us with which I am not well acquainted. But the welcome hour of dinner has come, for sea-air ever makes me a hungry man, and I adjourn to the saloon, with the captain and officers off duty, to satisfy the wants of the inward man. All meals are more or less alike. I am not a gourmand, but eat to live, not live to eat. How-

ever, this I will say, that the sundry dishes of oysters, cooked in different ways, were an endorsement of the high reputation that these American bivalves so justly enjoy.

After the cloth was removed, I had mixed myself a glass of my accustomed after-dinner whisky and water, and lit a cigar that had seen Havannah as late as last season—for, believe me, if you can get such weeds good, they are far better in flavour green, than if they had years of age—when the lighthouse in Holland Straits was reported in sight. This took all my companions on deck, and, as I was requested to feel at home, I followed their example, and at once distinguished something looming in the distance that very much resembled a large, square-rigged ship, with her top-sails set running before the wind. The water was now more discoloured, denoting its shoalness, and vast numbers of coots and loons were to be seen in every direction.

The breeze, which had sprung up since we left the deck, had freshened into half a gale, and as it came right aft, we bowled along right

merrily and very rapidly over the white-crested waves. Quickly we drew in towards the lighthouse; on either side of the Strait land commenced to show itself, which, in many parts, was covered with clumps of tall pine-trees. At length we were in land-locked water, and free from the previously-experienced motion, while an extensive view stretched before us, peculiar to the eastern shore of the Chesapeake.

Its sameness and monotony require but little description. Islands without number, all so flat that they are but a foot or two over high-tide mark, covered with a luxuriant growth of long wiry grass, and edged on their margin with dwarf swamp elder bushes, almost growing in the water, rise rapidly into view as we progress; but still not a human residence is in sight—in fact, the only thing that indicates that there are other human beings in this world besides ourselves, are a few far-distant fishing-vessels.

But every additional yard in our progress reveals new beauties to the sportman's or naturalist's eye. What is that far away to wind-

ward?—is it one of those black clouds that indicate the presence of a shower or the approach of a squall? No, it is not, but a flock of thousands of wild duck, seeking a new feeding-ground, or circling about to enjoy the pleasures of their powerful aerial flight. But it is not necessary to look so far away; in front of our craft, and on either side, float dozens of ducks, many of them within gun-shot. In the middle distance, and close in shore, is a space of many acres in extent, of some floating dark substance, making the surface of the water perfectly black.

At first I look at it without interest, imagining it to be only the wash of *débris* collected by the tide. However, as I scan the horizon with my field-glass, my range of vision gets concentrated upon it. Again and again I look—can it be possible? Whether or not, it is a solid mass of wild geese, packed so closely together, that the water on which they rest is completely hidden. However, our course takes us in closer to land, and we skirt their outside flank, at a distance of little over three hundred yards. With surprise and wonder I gaze at the un-

countable mass of living creatures, while the distance discovers flights of the same race hurrying to join the phalanxes of their brethren. If we had fired the rifles of the ship's armoury, giving them an elevation for three hundred yards range, I feel certain that each of their bullets must have found one, if not more, billets.

Soon we are abreast of the lighthouse, which is worth a word of description. The building is a tastefully-constructed cottage, painted white, with green blinds, and supported on iron piles, thirty or forty feet above high-water mark. On one side of the flooring swings a boat suspended from davits, while a wide promenade, bounded by railings, encircles the entire structure. From the centre of the cottage, and from where a principal chimney might be expected to rise, is built a large glass globe, which contains the reflectors, lights, and the paraphernalia necessary to point out to the storm-tossed mariner the course he is to steer, and the dangers necessary to avoid.

I learned that the lighthouse-keepers were strictly forbidden having their wives with them.

If true, why this law?—and how contrary to the boasted chivalrous habits of the Americans! Can they believe that woman's society is likely to militate against man performing his duty? My ideas are quite the reverse, and I think that those delightful agitators and supporters of women's rights should have this blot in the statutes of fair Maryland brought under their notice, that they might use their potent eloquence, all-powerful persuasive language, and graceful and truly lady-like declamation, to have them repealed.

However, in this I may be wrong, for possibly they do think that it is meet for man to dwell alone. I doubt much that the male representative of the *genus homo* that is compelled to lead this solitary life, if he be yoked to one of these strong-minded nuisances and out-of-place women, does rejoice that there is one place in the world he can escape to without being followed by the hen-pecker.

Onwards we sail through Holland Straits, till open water is again visible, and the distant shores of Eastern Maryland come in view. However,

we have to point our stem to the south-east, although our anchorage is to the north, till we can get round the end of a dangerous spit of mud that lies right in our track. A little under two miles progression brings us clear of this impediment; the rudder is put hard down, and we make again for the northward, till the haven is reached in which we intend remaining for the night. The name of this little secluded spot, surrounded by dense dark pines on three sides, and the open sea on the other, I forget; for in fact there was nothing remarkable about it to cause me to exercise my memory in its behalf, excepting that there was a long, low, beautiful-sparred, Yankee fore-and-aft schooner lying at anchor, loading with oysters for the modern Athens, a people who, I can well remember, although designated the "hub" of the universe, are not above catering to the enjoyment of the palate.

With the setting sun the breeze had died away, and we lay upon the bosom of the bay as calm and placidly as if even the memory of waves and squalls had been forgotten. At

length the moon rose clear and bright, and with it down went the thermometer, till it indicated several degrees below freezing. Sam remarked that if the frost continued the morrow would be a splendid day for ducks, as those that had sought fresher waters higher up the Chesapeake would all be driven back by the fresh formation of ice.

“You really think that such will be the case?” I inquired.

“You bet,” was the response.

So, believing that my friend would not advise me to risk my money on what he would not himself do the same, our guns and ammunition were looked to, and placed ready for immediate use, the warmest of clothes hunted out, flasks filled, and provender laid in, the steward ordered to waken us an hour before daylight, and a boat with four of the crew instructed to be ready to accompany us where we desired.

That night I could not sleep for anticipating the pleasures in store for me on the morrow. The pace of the sentry patrolling the deck was

construed by my imaginative brain into the sound produced by flocks of birds abruptly rising out of the water; the very ripple that broke on the vessel's sides had its soft melody mistaken for the plaintive call of wild-fowl. However, I must have ultimately visited dream-land, for when I was abruptly awakened by Frank, the steward, shaking me, at the same time explaining that breakfast had been on the table for a quarter of an hour, and that the boat's crew was impatient to be off, I had to rub my eyes several times before I could disabuse myself of the impression that I was dancing in a brilliantly-lighted ball-room, with the most fascinating of partners, and that, in spite of all my efforts to acquit myself well, or to propitiate my charming companion, I was doing quite the reverse, for my sabre and sabretash, or spurs, or something, would get between my legs or foul of each other, and cause me to lurch and stagger about as if I had imbibed too much. Doubtless this fantastical dream was the result of the half dozen raw oysters I had eaten at supper.

Oh! it almost makes me shiver to think of it—that morning was shockingly cold! The deck, bulwarks, stays, &c. of our vessel were white with frost, and the crew's noses as red as boiled prawns; but after sundry stumbles Sam and myself stowed ourselves into the stern-sheets, my friend taking the tiller, for he was a thorough boatman, having once been a Chesapeake pilot, and we pushed off on our excursion. Two miles against a strong head-tide lost us three-quarters of an hour, but the lads hung lustily to their oars, and, nothing daunted, ultimately forced us into Holland Strait. Across it we rapidly pushed for the feeding-ground on which we had yesterday seen such droves of wild geese. But here commenced a succession of misfortunes that at one time threatened to make ours a bootless errand.

For convenience and comfort we had taken the long-boat. In order that she might sail closer to the wind, she had lately been provided with a very deep standing keel, which, with the load that was now in her, made her draw over two feet of water; and the shoals which margined

Holland Island lay so near the surface, and projected so far from the shores, that all our efforts failed to bring us within three hundred yards of *terra firma*. Wading was proposed, but soon relinquished, for the bottom was so soft and clammy that it was doubtful whether a person who was venturous enough to try such a course could ever have extracted his limbs after getting them within its sticky influences. Nothing daunted, we coasted along to the southward on the western shores of Tangier Sound, every few hundred yards making a fresh effort to land; but all in vain, for three hours after the sun was up we were still afloat without having fired a shot.

In the distance lay an oyster-dredger. From the crew of this craft we hoped to obtain the desired information of where we could get ashore; but on gaining her deck we found the sole person on board was a stupid lout of a boy, who either could not or would not understand us. However, he was hospitable, and gave us permission to appropriate as many of his oysters as we desired, an invitation which required no pressing, for soon all were seated round the

main-hatch, knife in hand, devouring the delicious bivalves as if we had not eaten a meal for a month.

But wild-fowl were what we were in pursuit of, and as they were flying in thousands in all directions, we determined to make a fresh effort, so rowed off to an abrupt point covered with icebergs and snow. Here we succeeded in landing, but found the place occupied by two men, who had been there for hours on the same errand as ourselves, but had been so unsuccessful as to have only obtained three shots. From here we again got afloat, with the intention of trying our fortune on a diminutive grassy excrescence, situated nearly mid-channel, and designated Turtle-egg Island; but it blew so hard, and so little shelter was afforded from the winds, that the wild-duck refused to come near it. Again we got into the boat, and made for a still more distant point covered with swamp elder. Half an hour's hard pulling, besides shipping no end of water, brought us under its lee, and in a few minutes after we effected a landing. Now I knew we were going to have a

reward for our patient perseverance, for even when we stood exposed on the beach, flight after flight of red heads, black duck, canvas-backs, and black heads swept by us—some even sufficiently close to be within range. However, we were not permitted to be long idle, for a screen had to be erected, while the decoys required to be set out. Two of the crew soon accomplished the latter, while Sam, assisted by myself and the remaining lads, collected enough elder branches and sea-weed, out of which to make a first-rate blind.

Many may be ignorant of this method of shooting, and to them is due a certain amount of explanation. Wild-fowl almost invariably follow a lee-shore when feeding; and although they will not drop where a sea is breaking on the beach, if there happens to be in its immediate neighbourhood a sheltered nook, there they will pitch, doubtless in expectation of the grain, vegetable matter, and other substances that constitute their food being brought into such positions by the wash, at the same time not necessitating their exposing themselves to the

motion of the waves, to which they apparently have a great objection.

The blind or screen which I have mentioned is a temporary hedge, constructed out of bushes, or such material as may be at hand, behind which the sportsman secretes himself, in the form of three sides of a parallelogram, or an obtuse angle. However, care must be taken, in making these hiding-places, that they are not too high, or formed of material of a different colour from the surrounding objects, or else the wild-fowl will detect their purpose, and sheer off seaward before coming within range of the shooters. Consequently the sportsman, when occupying them, is compelled to lie down on his back, underneath which he should have a waterproof ground sheet to keep out the damp, as he only raises himself to a shooting position when the look-out warns him that "fowl" are within range. The game are only killed upon the wing, so the marksman is ignorant of its exact position till he rises to fire, and when taking aim must be quick, as the quarry are extremely swift. This description of sport requires much practice to make a good shot.

The decoys are placed in the shelter of a projecting point just upon the edge, but inside the water sheltered from the breeze; they are cut out of wood, being made through the skill of the constructor and the aid of the paint-pot to resemble as much as possible the game you are in pursuit of. Our decoys being placed, a goodly quantity of snow plastered on the front of the blind to make it more assimilate to the surrounding objects, and the boat ordered round to a little inlet about a hundred yards distant, and well hid by over-hanging banks, there to remain in readiness to pick up dead and cripples, we were ready for commencing operations; nor were we long kept idle, for scarcely had we got settled ready for work, when a large flock of bald-pates (American widgeon) were reported as coming our way.

Without a motion of hand or foot, anxiously we waited for information that the game was within range; at length the word is given, and we hurriedly rise to fire; already our movement has been noticed, and the wary birds have changed their horizontal direction of flight to

ascending almost perpendicularly, but fortunately before doing so they are within fair range. Sam fires both barrels, and each brings down the object of his aim ; I do likewise, but I undershoot with the first ; but pitching higher with my second barrel, I make a long and clever shot, our victims all falling among the decoys. Again and again this is repeated, with the exception that the ducks were of various species, and the flocks in numbers differed from three to a hundred.

It was now nearly two o'clock in the afternoon, and as we had a long way to go against both wind and tide, it was thought advisable to make a start for the steamboat, so orders were given for the decoys to be taken in. While the boat was getting ready to carry out our instructions, numerous small dipper-ducks came past, apparently anxious to find out and participate in the feed that they supposed our wooden representatives of their race were enjoying. Sam wished to see how my breech-loader could shoot, and, confident in its powers of performance, I watched my opportunity, and made two of the longest and best shots I ever fired in my life.

In fact, the second bird was so far off, that I had a considerable degree of hesitation in putting my gun to so severe and, I might say, unjust a trial; but it acquitted itself in such a manner that, even in my estimation, it rose twenty per cent.

When the boat had reached the decoys to lift them, we were joined by one of the men we had met after leaving the oyster schooner, and who, as I stated, had been unsuccessful. He assured us there was no necessity for hurry, as he had seen the steamboat run in behind Haine's Point on the opposite shore, and was now certain to be at anchor between Devil's Island and Dame's Quarter. If this was true—and we had no reason to doubt it—we had sufficient time for half an hour's more shooting, so the boat was ordered back to its hiding-place, and, re-enforced by the new-comer, we sought the shelter of the screen. Soon we were again busy, for there appeared no end of game, but I felt uncomfortable, for every time I looked to the left, I could see down the muzzle of the stranger's gun. This was very unpleasant—more particularly

so when I saw that the thing was as old as the hills, as brown with rust as a crowbar, and a lock upon it—oh! Heavens—well, that would have been quite as suitable for the lock for a door, as for the purpose to which it was applied. At first I thought it would look squeamish to take any notice of its barrel incessantly covering me, as if I were a beast of prey; but, being aware that no pension awaited the loss of an arm or a leg got rid of under such circumstances, I mildly remonstrated. However, I was assured that there was no danger—that the gun was a pattern of good behaviour, and had never shot anyone so far—at least, not since it had been in its present owner's possession. Not knowing, however, how soon it might begin to adopt this playful line of conduct, I blandly requested that the proprietor would not point his shooting-iron in my direction again, as it made me nervous and put me off my shooting. Now, though I cannot see that there was anything particularly wrong in pursuing such a course, Captain Lu (for so he was designated) apparently felt himself ag-

grieved by the Britisher at his shoulder, for, *sotto voce*, I heard him muttering something about a "timid cuss."

Several more shots were fired, and the newcomer, I must say, held his gun straight upon the birds at which it was presented, and this antediluvian specimen of firearms played its part to perfection.

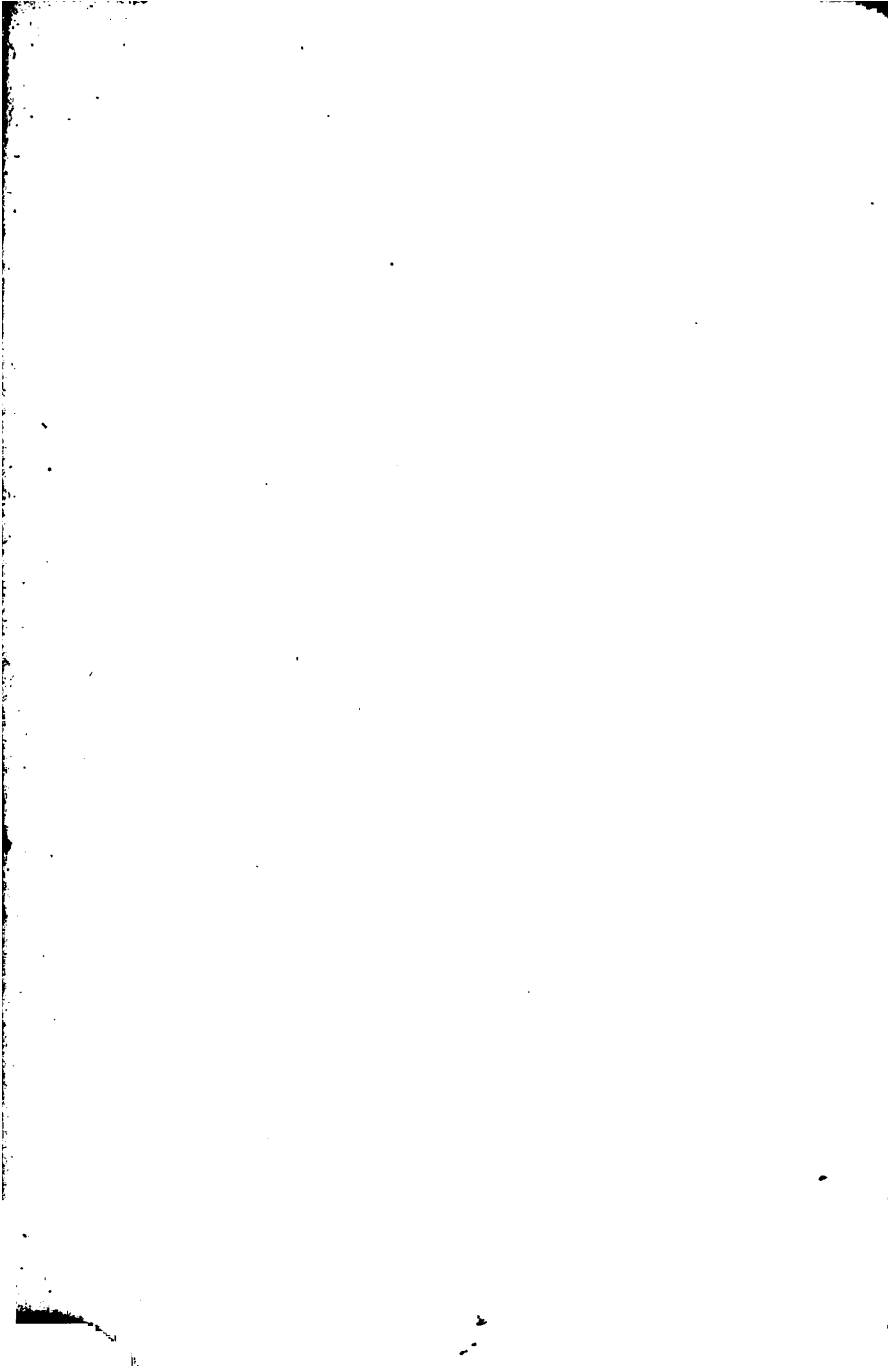
This was so far well enough; but when I heard a report close to my ear, and the rush of displaced air consequent on the rapid movement of projectiles, in immediate proximity to my person, more particularly when no game was in sight, I could not help feeling that such a companion was sufficiently dangerous to be objectionable. Nevertheless, I said nothing, but treated the affair in the coolest possible manner, for I did not wish this gentleman to think that I was not able to stand fire as well as any of the fiercest fire-eaters. At the same time I mentally registered a vow that it would be a long time before I would either join, or permit to join me, a Chesapeake duck-shooter who killed his game with an implement that must have

been constructed, and had possibly seen its best days, before Noah went into the Ark.

Allowing sufficient time to pass, so that my proposal of an adjournment might not appear to arise from this little *contretemps*, I proposed a cessation of our sport, which was at once concurred in, and we were soon all afloat, minus the gentleman possessed of the antiquated shooting-iron.

CHAPTER XII.

A LONG AND SEVERE PULL—SAM'S QUICK EYES—THE "WOOLFORD"—CAPTAIN MAC———HUNGER THE BEST SAUCE
—THE BEAU-IDEAL OF A SAILOR—BLOWING GREAT GUNS
—A DISAPPOINTMENT—OYSTER-DREDGERS—CRISFIELD—
THE STATESMEN AND GENERALS OF THE SOUTH—OFFICERS
OF THE NORTHERN ARMY—DEVIL'S ISLAND—FROM BALTI-
MORE TO ANNAPOLIS.



CHAPTER XII.

ON rounding a headland, we saw a great quantity of smoke towards Haine's Point, and the nearer we approached to it, the more thoroughly did we become convinced that it originated from fires lit by the inhabitants to burn the surplus grass off the swamps that surrounded that locality. Thus the story of the gunboat having been seen was accounted for; and so, with night rapidly approaching, and the thermometer as quickly falling, we had to push on over the dark and angry waters to seek the vessel.

"A long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together," was the only thing that could be of use to us, and the lads did hang most manfully to their oars; but our progress was slow, for we were pitching into a short, tumbling head-sea,

with the wind right in our teeth, and the boat was so heavily loaded that every few moments we shipped quantities of water. Sam stuck to the tiller, and I, being the only idle man on board, removed the flooring underneath the stern-sheets, and occupied myself with incessant bailing. Oh ! it was cold, bitterly cold, and ice began to form so rapidly that I felt I had imposed upon myself far from an easy task ; but as it had to be performed by some one, why not by me ? I persevered, therefore, in spite of all, and soon had our boat comparatively free. My example encouraged the lads, and I am certain raised me very much in their estimation ; for nothing is so calculated to raise a gentleman in the estimation of the working-classes in America, as for him to show that he is not above doing the work he asks from them.

Our position at this time was far from enviable, and almost sufficient to cause one to cry off from future Winter boating excursions in search of wild-fowl ; but not a murmur was uttered, and each strove to do conscientiously his allotted task. Our consumption of whisky

during the day had been heavy—in fact, I feared that our supply was finished, when, to my surprise and delight, I found that a good fair glass remained for each ; so, impartially dealing to every man his ration, we recommenced work, with renewed vigour, but with little doubt that daybreak would surprise us toiling at our task.

Sam has a wondrous sharp eye in his head for discovering a pretty woman, a wild duck, or a smart-looking craft. For some minutes I had noticed his eyes fixed on a sail to windward. However, he said nothing. At length he sprung to his feet and exclaimed,

"Give way, my hearties, for, as I'm a live sinner, there's the *Woolford*. I would swear to the way that topmast is stayed, if she were among a thousand !"

But what was the *Woolford*? Well, a cutter of about twenty tons, belonging to the Oyster Police Force. It was long before we could attract her crew's attention, but at length we succeeded in doing so by firing several shots, when we had the satisfaction to see her brought round

from the wind and her stem pointed in our direction. In ten minutes we were alongside, but a considerable time elapsed before we all got transferred from the boat to her comfortable accommodation.

Captain Mac——, who commanded this craft, I could not help taking particular notice of. He at once impressed me with a feeling that I was in the society of no ordinary person; for his manners were quiet and courteous, his voice low and soft, and his intonation when talking most impressive. A rather spare man, with a large aquiline nose; he stood over six feet high; his mouth was small, but determined; and his eye, although it possessed the softness of the dove's, could, in case of necessity, flash with fire, resolution, and courage. Neat and tidy to a degree, although but coarsely clad, he looked at once the *beau-ideal* of a sailor. I may spend more time and space in describing the skipper of the *Woolford* than my readers deem right; but when I add that at future periods we were thrown much together, and that each succeeding interview enabled me to dis-

cover fresh points worthy of admiration in his character, I am convinced I shall be pardoned. Never was a change more acceptable than that from the open boat to the snug cabin of the *Woolford*; and the steaming cups of coffee which the cook immediately furnished us with, were the most enjoyable I think I ever tasted, for it is a well-known fact that there is no sauce like hunger.

But our little cutter, as she had as much canvas set as she could stagger under, was pitching into it, for she was again upon the wind, which steadily kept increasing. I love the sea, I am fond of vessels, and more than all, I like to see a gallant craft handled by an expert seaman. So I quietly stole up the hatch, over which my head had scarcely got elevated, when I became aware that it was really blowing great guns. Up to windward, and within arm's length of the two lads at the tiller, stood the skipper, with a smile on his lip and a look in his eye that spoke of fearless, undaunted resolution. Not a word did he speak, but with a quiet, dignified motion of his hand, indicated

to the helmsman when he wished the craft brought a little closer up to the breeze, or eased off. Neither by word nor sign would I have distracted his attention from his duty ; and he was doing it like a man whose heart was in his work.

My *beau-ideal* of a master seaman is not the one generally accepted by the public, who select as the object of their admiration a rackets, blustering, grog-loving, devil-may-care kind of fellow ; while in my opinion he should be a quiet, temperate, and silent man, with quick decision of character, and resolution to give effect to it.

At length we had crawled up sufficiently to windward of Holland Strait to ease off a little, and then the taut little cutter fairly flew over the snow-capped waves, and in an hour afterwards we found the steamer, and succeeded in gaining her deck.

To the commander of the *Woolford* we were much indebted, for it was through him we were saved from what at one time appeared possible, and probable, the disagreeable neces-

sity of having to spend a long wintry night in an open boat, or at least many more hours exposure to the raging elements.

From what I have stated, it will be seen that those that go abroad in pursuit of wild-sports, must not only be willing, but also able to stand exposure, for where game is abundant, population is sparse, and consequently none of the luxuries of life are to be obtained, but only such things as are absolutely necessities; and not always even these.

Next morning broke fair and mild, as if the weather had worn itself out in trying to be disagreeable. Wild-fowl were to be seen in uncountable numbers in every direction; and several fishing-boats, which came alongside to show their fishing licences, reported that they were unusually tame. I had hoped to have a long day among them, but was disappointed, for the reason that the commander, who was not a sportsman, did not understand the pleasure of shooting, and could not see what others enjoyed in it. He had therefore made up his mind to start for Crisfield, the principal port on the

Chesapeake engaged in the oyster trade; and as I had made no arrangements for staying on shore, I was compelled in consequence, very much against my will, to go also.

To compensate for my disappointment, we had a splendid sail through Tangier Sound, right over the same water on which we had wrestled with the winds and waves yesterday, past Devil's Island, the Dame's Quarter, and Turtle-egg Island, all of which to-day was surrounded with game; then through fleets of oyster dredgers, pretty clipper-like crafts, nearly all schooner-rigged, and carrying in their gibs and mainsails their registered number, till the first lighthouse that marks the entrance to Crisfield harbour came in sight. This is an edifice similar to the one described in my account of our passage through Holland Straits, only if possible its situation is more bleak and less accessible. In due course of time this was rounded, and our stem pointed for another lighthouse, like the first, three miles off. When we reached it, the town of Crisfield, with its numerous store-

houses, wharves, and packing-sheds, came into view.

Crisfield is a busy place, containing, I should imagine, a population of several thousand persons, although it dates its birth only a few years back. To oysters it owes its prosperity, and on oyster shells it is built, for all the surrounding country is swamp, flooded in Winter, and prolifically productive of malaria in Summer. Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, however, it is a most pushing-go-ahead place, with a population ever wide awake, and on the *qui vive* to make a dollar. Already through their enterprise, the Wilmington and Delaware line of Railroad has been extended to their wharves, and a train runs to and from Wilmington daily, where connection can be made with other lines going to every portion of the United States. A freight line of steamers also is constantly running between Crisfield and Norfolk, Virginia, and two most roomy comfortable passenger steam-vessels ply between it and Baltimore, each making the trip twice a week.

Soon after our arrival, we landed to see the lions, which there was no difficulty in discovering. We then sought the Post-office, Telegraph station, and Express office, where, finding neither letters nor parcels, I concluded that no news must be accepted as good news; and obtaining a number of the latest papers, retired to the gun-boat to learn what had been going on in the civilized world during my absence from it. I had got myself seated in a most comfortable camp-chair, and was looking forward to a treat; but the first thing in every sheet I opened that caught my eye was those disgusting Alabama Claims, recalling at once most annoyingly the weak, erroneous policy into which we had been duped. I could relish no subject after this, for I was like a person who, having swallowed a nauseous draught, required some time before he could rid his mouth of the abominable taste.

Some may imagine that I dislike Americans, but this is an utter mistake, for if I did so it would certainly be the basest ingratitude on my part, as I have received at their hands the greatest kindnesses and attentions. There are,

however, some whom I prefer to others, and those are the people of Maryland and Virginia, for whom in their present distressing and altered circumstances I feel the deepest sympathy ; more particularly as I believe that they were justified in adopting the course which they followed during the late rebellion ; for as they lost the day, I suppose this term "rebellion" is correct. Still I could not find it in my heart to call such noble specimens of statesmen, soldiers, and patriots as President Davis, Generals Robert E Lee and Stonewall Jackson, and a thousand others, whose names I trust will live in the scroll of fame, by the hated word "rebel." The Bruce of Bannockburn, the Tell of Switzerland, the Kosciusko of Poland, have not greater claims on the memory of posterity than have these gallant chiefs, that drew their swords in defence of their birth-rights.

Worthy descendants are they of their cavalier ancestry, as their deeds have proved ; yet for all their determined courage, it was ordained that they should succumb before the overwhelming numbers of the Northern mercenaries.

Ay, the Puritan breed, by nature and inclination traders, hucksters, or dissimulators, have profited by their education and experience in cheating and swindling; so through chicanery they placed the right before the world as wrong, and used their hoarded wealth to employ aliens, to accomplish what they had not the courage to do themselves.

Against the Yankees of America I have not half as bitter feelings as I have against the Yankees of England, for we possess them. So let us take warning by what has been seen in our day, and be prepared to resist their aggression. I am not troubled at the time I write this with a fit of spleen or gout, or liver-complaint either, but if you knew one-half the indignities that some of the noble, honourable, high-spirited gentlemen of the Southern States were subjected to by the pot-house politicians who too frequently filled the position of officers in the Northern army, your blood would boil with indignation, and your every thought would be condensed into a soul-absorbing craving to help to avenge their wrongs.

I was detained at Crisfield for some days, from the weather being bad ; and, therefore, I determined to return to Baltimore to obtain my traps, and find the best possible means of reaching Devil's Island ; for from all the information I could collect, I felt convinced that it was the very best shooting station on the whole bay, provided you sought every description of wild-fowl. Moreover, game is so abundant about it, and the population is so sparse, that one may go where he likes and do as he pleases. I am informed, however, that the inhabitants are a desperately rough lot ; *n'importe*, they can scarcely be worse than some of the society I have been in, west of the Rocky Mountains.

Having completed my business, and got my traps together on this occasion, I went from Baltimore to Annapolis by rail. This journey is made by taking the train half-way to Washington, where a branch line runs off directly to Annapolis. Travelling on the latter part of this line is very slow—partly from the frequency of stoppages, and partly from the rough and cheap construction of the road. The

country, after leaving Baltimore, is very pretty, particularly along that portion of the route where you obtain sight of the wide Chesapeake, and where sundry streams and rivulets are traversed. As you get further inland, however, the country appears to become more barren, and less attractive. The soil is of a very light sandy nature, and, judging from the shortness and thinness of the corn stalks, last Autumn must have been productive of very light crops, or the country must be unable to bear heavy ones. There is an abundance of water in every direction, and bush of sufficient size to form admirable cover for game is to be found on each uncultivated hill-side. Sometimes, although rarely, the line runs through woods, all stamped with one character, viz., stunted timber rather sparsely scattered over a very swampy bottom, almost impenetrable to a human being, from a dense growth of creeping shrubs.

What this locality might have been before the war I cannot say, for this was my first visit to Annapolis by railroad. At the present time, the

greater portion of the country looks so deserted that it cannot fail to have anything but a cheering effect upon the traveller's spirits. My big and kind friend John S——, who was with me, beguiled the tedium of the journey by sporting anecdotes, tales of bygone celebrities, and descriptions of places the sun of whose glory had set. At length a tall, stalwart, handsome fellow, who only required the costume of Charles II.'s reign to make him in appearance the *beau-ideal* of an uncompromising opponent of the Roundheads, passed my seat in going from one end of the carriage to the other ; for all of the cars have a longitudinal passage through them. Feeling confident that there could not be in the same neighbourhood two such perfect types of the date previously alluded to, and that I was looking at a person to whom I had been introduced, and whom I had sat next during a long and very thirsty terrapin supper, I greeted the stranger with a salute which he graciously returned, and we soon got into an interesting conversation. However, to my surprise, whenever I alluded to our former meeting, an expression

denoting astonishment appeared to flit across his features. Turning abruptly round I observed my friend endeavouring to smother his inclination to laugh, and in a moment I knew that some joke was being perpetrated, of which I was the subject. At length the new arrival, and John S——, unable to contain themselves longer, gave way to their risible tendencies, but not before I had learned that I was speaking to the twin-brother of the gentleman who had been my entertaining neighbour at the supper-party. When I say that their most intimate friends could not tell them apart, it will not surprise anyone when I state that, after frequently enjoying their society, residing in the same hotel, and meeting them frequently in the society of my associates—up to the day I left Maryland, I could not tell “which was t’other.”

CHAPTER XIII.

A DOUBLE-BEDDED ROOM—A PLEASANT PARTY—FEELING OF
THE SOUTH FOR ENGLAND—A GAMBLING ESTABLISHMENT
—"FIGHTING THE TIGER"—INTERVIEW WITH THE GO-
VERNOR—DEPARTURE FROM ANNAPOLIS--A STRANGE
STORY—THE PAUTUXENT—POPLAR ISLAND—A YARN THAT
BEATS ANYTHING—A GUM-SUCKING SPREE—PHEBE ANNE'S
GLOVE.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT length, in due course of time, we got to the termination of our journey, and as some most important debate was to take place on the morrow, in reference to the repealing of an old, or introduction of a new law, at which the governor was expected to be present at Annapolis, the legislature had all assembled, as well as the principal politicians and office-seekers of Maryland; so that persons were glad, in many occasions, to sleep four in a room—for without submitting to this doubling-up process, they would have been compelled to pass the night in a chair in the hotel office. I fortunately had telegraphed to the proprietor a day or two previous, advising him of my coming, so that I was fortunate to become the sole possessor of a

double-bedded room. My companion, not having done so, would have had reason to regret his negligence, but that I was able to offer him accommodation. Americans think nothing of sleeping two or three in a room, and in the Western states they have no objection to sleep two or three in a bed. The former does not much matter, the second I have been compelled to do once or twice, but I would as soon sleep with a porcupine as I would with one of my own sex, for it appears to me that, whether sleeping or waking, your sole endeavour is to get as far from the other occupant as the limits of the bed will allow.

The hospitality of these Maryland legislators and politicians seems to be, like the heavens, boundless. Scarcely had I swallowed tea when I received an invitation to a terrapin supper. Our host was an epicure, with the advantage of possessing considerable knowledge of the art of cooking. I accepted his invitation with pleasure, and a few minutes afterwards some one whispered into my ear that, however much I had enjoyed terrapin on former occasions, I

should find that my coming experience would eclipse all others—a fact that I had afterwards no hesitation in acknowledging. I would not attempt to say how much Champagne was drunk on this occasion ; all I know is, that when our party broke up an army of dead heads was arrayed in a corner, proving that, though our thirst had almost been unquenchable, the supply was equal to the demand. A more generally intelligent, better-informed company I have seldom met. The courtesy of their address, and the refinement of their manners, would have done credit to a Court, and the affection with which they spoke of the mother-country, the regrets they expressed that the policy of their forefathers had severed them from the parent-land, as well as the earnest and sincere manner in which they drunk Her Majesty's health, and wished her long life and happiness, made me feel that the line of demarcation between Marylanders and our own countrymen was a distinction without a difference.

There is a curious institution in this antiquated capital—one, in fact, common to every city

in the Union, supplying a want which in London is met by our club-houses, viz., an establishment where those disposed to gamble can do so. The existence of this institution is doubtless known to the majority of the community, but it is conducted in so quiet and orderly a manner that, not attracting public attention, it is not interfered with. Wines, spirits, and supper are supplied to the visitor gratuitously, and it is entirely left to his choice whether he will play or not. About two in the morning a few of the latest sitters adjourned to this establishment, to give me a sight of life such as I had not previously seen in Maryland. At the same time I was cautioned against playing; but not choosing to look remarkable, I hazarded a trifling stake, which having lost, I withdrew from the board. The game was Faro, which all who play for money know, while those who do not need have no desire to learn it. Suffice it to say that it is believed to be the least objectionable of all gambler's games, as it provides less opportunity for sleight-of-hand or cheating, in any form, than any other game. More-

over, the cards are dealt from a box, which insures them coming out as shuffled and cut. When one ventures to try his luck in these establishments, he is usually said to be "fighting the tiger," and, as may be well imagined, the combatant very often retires from the contest well scratched for his temerity.

Late hours do not appear to have the effect here of producing late rising, for when I came down to breakfast next morning, I found that all my associates of the previous evening had partaken of that meal hours before, and were now busy settling the affairs of the ship of State. My kind friend, John S——, soon joined me, and volunteered, if I felt so disposed, to introduce me to the Governor. As this gentleman, from his talents and abilities, is destined, if spared, to occupy a most elevated position among the statesmen of his country, I felt only too happy to be thus honoured. We therefore crossed to the charming and most picturesque old capitol, threaded our way through place-hunters and button-holders, that thronged the vestibule, and ascended a spiral

staircase to the Governor's reception-room. When we entered, we were introduced to several gentlemen, all of whom had distinguished themselves as statesmen or soldiers in the late struggle. The affability and cordiality of all could only be exceeded by their courteous and gentlemanly manners.

A delightful quarter of an hour passed, during which I received several invitations, when the Governor, accompanied by a friend, entered. I had expected to see a handsome man, and in this I was not disappointed; but not to speak of the kind and gentle look of his eye, there was a charm of intellect in his expression which could not but suggest to the least observant judges of character, that the gentleman in whose presence I stood was no ordinary person, but one alike capable of creating admiration by his talents, and awaking friendship in the bosoms of those who knew him by his affability. Our conversation glided over a variety of subjects, and I would fain have remained longer, but I saw that I was interfering with a host of persons, who doubtless

were waiting for interviews on business subjects. Having promised therefore to call at the Governor's private residence before I left, I received a hearty shake of the hand, and withdrew.

Life in Annapolis soon afterwards became very dull, the politicians having fled, and with them the office-seekers and their attendants, so that I found time hang rather heavily on my hands. For this, however, there was no necessity, as there was plenty of game in the neighbourhood, and beautiful walks and rides in every direction. But the truth was that I sighed for the lower part of Chesapeake Bay, for its wild and comparatively unpeopled marshes and islands; and more than all for its innumerable flocks of wild-fowl. But how to get there was a puzzle which I found difficult to unravel, unless I returned to Baltimore, and took passage from there in one of the numerous oyster-dredgers returning from that market; and this I objected to, on two accounts—first, because I did not then wish to return to Baltimore, and secondly, the voyage down the bay, in the

depth of Winter, in one of these small crafts exclusively fitted up for freight, did not find favour in my eyes. However, I got out of my quandary better and sooner than I expected, for the gun-boat, which had been up in Baltimore coaling, called in at Annapolis on her voyage to the lower fishing-grounds. A passage was readily accorded me, and next day, at noon, I found my way on board, where I was met by honest, kind-hearted old Sam as I ascended the gangway. What a grip he gave my hand!—almost enough, if it had not been a tolerably strong one, to squeeze it into a pancake; and I was greeted with the same salutations by all his subordinates.

For a few days previously I had suffered from a slight attack of the blues, but the congenial associates who now surrounded me soon scattered them to the winds, and I felt once more as if my foot was on my native heath. About two o'clock we got under way for the Pautuxent river, which was to be our first stopping-place. A senator and a member of the legislature were passengers—the former returning home on private business; the latter because he

had been summoned to attend the sick-bed of one of his children, who, the medical adviser thought, would not recover. Both were very agreeable persons, but the latter was so much cut up by the sad errand on which he was engaged, that he felt in no humour for society. Not so, however, the senator, who was full of anecdote and personal reminiscences of the war, which he told in so attractive a manner, that he never failed to retain the attention and interest of his auditor.

It was long after dark when we passed Solomon's Island, but the numerous lights twinkling from its cottages plainly indicated its position. The upper portion of the Pautuxent, although not narrower than previously, becomes in parts very shallow, while spits of dangerous sand and mud project from every point, often forming almost complete barriers across the river bed in sudden and abrupt bends. We were consequently compelled to slacken our pace to half-speed, and keep the lead-line incessantly at work.

Although the night was very dark, and there

were no lights along the margin of the river to guide the navigator, by nine o'clock we had ascended fifteen miles above Solomon's Island without having once grounded. Here the long-boat was lowered, and both my new acquaintances departed—the legislator to drive, walk, or ride fifteen miles across country, the senator to rest at his father-in-law's house, which was close at hand.

Having been successful in getting the steam-boat round without touching bottom, which, it was feared, would have been a difficult business, we dropped down stream three or four miles, and then came to an anchor for the night—the early part of which passed rapidly away, with the aid of pipes, yarns, and good-fellowship. A strange story, illustrative of the trying ordeals landed proprietors had to go through in this part of the country during the late war, was communicated to me by one of the ship's officers. The father-in-law of the gentleman who had just left us was noted far and wide for his hospitality and kindness of heart. When the war broke out, although a

slave-owner, and related to all the leading Southern families in this and the neighbouring states, he positively refused to take any steps that might be considered as hostile towards the flag under which he had been nurtured, and long lived.

At length Maryland was overrun with troops in the pay of the North—troops composed, not only of every nationality, but also of persons of every colour. The true old man had constantly to submit to the greatest indignities—more painful to be borne, because the perpetrators of them were sometimes emancipated slaves, some of whom had, at no remote period, been in the employment of himself or acquaintances. Fearing violence—for these blacks appeared to be subjected to no discipline—the females of his household were secretly despatched to Washington, so that the old gentleman remained alone, if we except a few domestics, on whom the utmost reliance could be placed. At length, one day, a number of these coloured scoundrels appeared before his house, and insisted on searching it; having pre-

viously fabricated the pretext that they had been informed that a spy or political refugee was secreted in it. Conscious of his innocence of the charge preferred against him, he requested the non-commissioned officer that commanded the party to produce his authority for such a violation of his domicile; and, on his failing to do so, the old gentleman ordered the whole party off, refusing to admit them, or to have any further parley with them. This determined line of conduct so enraged the men that they threatened to take the place by storm. The proprietor, however, far from being intimidated by this threat, told them that on the first evidence of their attempting to put it into execution he would use his fire-arms. The blacks, possibly thinking this was only a menace to which he would never give effect, disregarded it, and advanced upon the hall-door, with the intention of carrying the place by assault; but the first shot from the house killed their leader, and so intimidated the survivors that the attacking-party drew back discomfited, vowing vengeance.

The report of what had occurred soon spread over the county, and brought to the scene numerous friends and advisers, who, one and all, agreed that, if the old gentleman valued his life, he had better, without further delay, leave for one of the Confederate States. Much against his will he did so, and there remained till the cessation of hostilities, when he returned to Washington, and gave himself up. The craving for blood, however, having been by this time appeased, a Southerner had some chance of obtaining justice, and he was instantly released, by orders of the executive.

Next morning I was on deck before the men had manned the capstan. The anchor had sunk so deep in the soft, alluvial mud at the bottom of the river that, although sufficient chain to permit the vessel's riding easily had been paid out, the hawser was now directly perpendicular. It was a long and severe effort to get our emblem of faith started, but at length it moved slowly, gradually acquiring greater rapidity, until, loaded with the clammy stuff in which it had been imbedded, it made its appearance.

When the first glimpse of the sun was immediately expected to show itself in the east, I became aware, from the numerous flags that I saw prepared to be hung out to greet his advent, and the manning of the large brass cannon, that something important was on the *tapis*. When the fiery crescent showed its roseate face above the horizon, flags were unfolded in a moment from every available place where a hal-yard could be made fast, and the echoes of the Pautuxent were awakened from their slumbers by the thundering report of the piece of ordnance, followed by vigorous cheers from all on board. The actors in this drama had now, for the first time, breath and time to tell me that it was the anniversary of Washington's birthday—one point in which North and South do not differ, both equally reverencing the memory of this great and good man.

The Pautuxent, at that portion where we passed the night, and downwards to its mouth, is a splendid-looking river, flowing through a very rich and highly-cultivated country. Before the war the traffic along its shores was con-

siderable, but at the present time there is little required. I was informed that the English troops which captured Washington city during the last war between England and the United States landed here, and that the graves occupied by the remains of fellow-countrymen, who perished either from exposure, hardship, or the deadly rifle, are still to be seen in the vicinity.

I could not help thinking to myself what a place it would be for two evenly-matched and numerically equal hosts to meet in hostile array. There are no hills or inequalities of any importance in the neighbourhood, the occupation of which could be regarded as a key-stone to command the whole position. It was the very spot for a soldier's battle, in which victory could be obtained only by the bravest and best troops.

After passing Drum Point, breakfast was served; and when it was finished, smoking my morning pipe, I observed in the distance, a little to the northward of our course, an island which I had not previously noticed, so sought the wheel-house for information regarding it. Now, like

nearly all American steamships, this gun-boat is covered with deck-houses from her stern to some distance beyond midships, with the exception of a passage between the bulk-heads and the bulwarks, to permit the crew to pass around when in the performance of their duties. On the top of these deck-houses forward was situated the wheel-house, a comfortable room, closed in snugly with glass in its front, heated with steam-pipes, and sufficiently large to have space for stretching charts.

Here I found Sam, with his powerful hands on the spokes, keeping a good look-out ahead ; for, although senior executive officer, he took his turn at the wheel when the navigation became intricate, or his subordinates had had a longer term of duty than usual.

Poplar Island, I learned, was the name of the place about which I was anxious to inquire. It was apparently tolerably thickly inhabited, and of considerable extent.

"Cap, I could tell you a yarn about a friend of mine going ashore in that locality once, that beats anything I believe you have heard in

these parts. It was the biggest gum-sucking spree I ever heard tell of."

My friend at the wheel having thus commenced, I requested him to give me particulars, a desire with which he was obliging enough to comply.

"A few years ago he and several companions landed here of a Sunday forenoon on a matter of business. The day was pretty nearly spent before they had succeeded in their purpose, and as it was blowing fresh, and this was a lee shore, they determined to remain all night, in preference to running any risks in embarking through the heavy sea that broke on the beach. Near where you see that big barn looming out among the pine-trees is a farm-house, to which they went to seek shelter, and if possible obtain a meal. Finding the folks really hospitable and glad to see them, they made themselves at home around the hearth-stone.

"Soon after dark they noticed that the young folks were all getting rigged up in their 'Sunday go-to-meeting clothes,' so inquired what was up, to which the old folks replied that there

was preaching down in the school-house hard by, and that they guessed the young folks would be on for some gum-sucking as soon as it was over. You must know, Cap, this is a real primitive place, no steamboats land near it, and the line of cars (railroad) from Princess Anne to Baltimore is thirty good miles off. Well, hearing that such good things as preaching and gum-sucking were both to be enjoyed at the same place, my friend and his comrades determined to be in the hunt."

"But what is gum-sucking?" I asked.

"You'll learn quick enough before you leave these parts; but wait and you will hear. In due course of time they reached the school-house, where they found a pretty good sprinkling of fine, likely-looking lasses, all fixed out in their very best, waiting for the minister. Till he came my friend and his comrades found that they were the objects of attraction, for it was a rare thing to see in those part three or four strangers. At length the expounder of the Gospel arrived; and he was a powerful preacher, for he did pound the book most shamefully, but did not

look like a fellow that would have done the same to his own match. Still he had the ears and sympathies of the people with him, at least the women folks, which is much the same, for the men all follow after them. The young ones soon began to pipe their eyes, and the old ones to blubber right out ; and after a good two hours of it, the minister thought he had given the folks enough for their money, so finished off. The old folks got up to go home, but as the young ones sat still, my friend and his pals did the same. At length, when all that were going had passed the door, it was closed and barred in a moment, and every light in the school-house was doused at the same instant. Then commenced the gum-sucking. Every fellow caught the first lass he could lay his hand upon, and kissed her to his satisfaction ; then, changing about, they did the same to somebody else, never knowing, in the dark, whether they didn't get a hold of the same sweetheart half a dozen times over. Twice among the number that came in reach my friend kissed a girl with a real pouting nice pair of lips, who, he suspected, must be one

of the quality of the place, for she had on gloves, a scarce article in those diggings. When again he came across her, as he took his buss he pulled off one of the gloves to keep as a memento of the spree, and possibly as a means of discovering who was this crummiest piece of goods he had ever had his arm round. At length time was up, the doors were opened, and those that chose saw their sparks home. My acquaintance watched outside the school-house for nigh a quarter of an hour to accompany his new flame, but nary one that come out looked a mite like her. When he got home he examined the glove, which, on inspection, did not prove to be much to look at, for it was *busted* in many places, and tolerably changed in colour in others. It was as nearly a used-up glove as ever he had *seen* afore, and that's a fact. Still a pretty woman might have on an old glove, and there was no denying the practical fact that she was a one-er to kiss. Possibly, for fear of making her young man jealous, she had taken off the other glove before leaving, or, as likely as not, she might have dropped it in the crush; so before starting on

the morrow for their boat, he determined to call at the school-house, and find out from the sweeper, or the school-mam, some of the particulars about the girls that lived in the neighbourhood. His visit was paid so early that he found the old negro woman who had charge of the place cleaning up, and none of the young folks yet arrived. This was a chance for him. Knowing human natur well, niggers most particularly, 'Chloe,' says he, 'I'll give you half a dollar, if you can find out, and tell me, which of the young ladies about here is jist the crummiest, plumpest little pullet in the whole place!' 'Well, massa,' says she, 'I'se require to think. There's Mary Jane Smith; no, there's Sally Reed is fatter than she, or Maggie Brown, she's heftier still.' And she would have gone over a list goodness knows how long, when he stopped her, and produced the glove. On looking at it she screamed outright, 'It's my Phoebe Anne's, whom I sent into the school-house, when preaching was over, to rake out the fire, and you're the fellow that used her so shameful, and burst every bone in

her stays!' I could hear the old woman shouting at the top of her voice for Phoebe Anne, while my friend hurried off to get his pals together, and out of the neighbourhood, ere the story leaked out, for he would never have heard the end of it. You may bet he did not keep that glove, or forget that experience of gum-sucking. I never now myself get into a scrape of the same kind without first convincing myself that the hair of the darlings is not wool."

CHAPTER XIV.

DEVIL'S ISLAND—A RETREAT FOR PIRATES—"LITTLE CUSSES"

DAME'S QUARTERS—A GOOD OLD LAW—WILD FOWL ON
THE POOLS—WEATHER-PROPHECYING—INTERCOURSE WITH
AMERICANS—STUDIES IN ORNITHOLOGY—THE KILDEE
PLOVER—ITS PLAINITIVE AND MELODIOUS NOTE—A REMI-
NISCENCE OF BOYHOOD—THE BLUE-BIRD—AMERICAN
MEADOW-LARKS.



CHAPTER XIV.

SOON after this yarn was finished, we doubled Hayne's Point and Devil's Island, on the one side, and the Dame's Quarter on the other, opened out before us. Previously, when passing down the bay, I had seen them in the distance, but had no idea of their importance till now. The combined white and black population of these out-of-the-way places is upwards of two hundred persons; and the number of residences required to accommodate so many inhabitants gives them quite an air of importance. Devil's Island is said to have been once a port of entry for shipping, but as the residents objected to handing over to the National Treasury the export and import duties, a couple of companies of soldiers were sent down to drub them into order, take forcible possession of the misappropriat-

ed coffers, and demolish the Custom-house.

Another rumour is also current here, that this island was originally settled by an old buccaneer, or pirate; and there are many evidences that such might have been the case, for, growing on the island, there are shrubs and trees which, through lapse of years, have become almost indigenous to it, but are to be found nowhere in the neighbourhood. At Hayne's Point also stand the ruins of a windmill, which must be very old; and in its vicinity is an earth-work, which very probably has once been the site of a fort.

Dropping surmises, however, one thing is certain, that in olden times, when pirates and buccaneers flourished, few better situations could have been selected for a retreat in which they might refit, or find shelter from a superior force. A person might cruise many times up and down the broad bosom of the Chesapeake before discovering that such a place existed; and in the days when charts were very few and very imperfect, if this sanctuary had been discovered, ordinary deep draft vessels, without

the aid of a pilot, would have required weeks to reach it.

My landing was accomplished with much difficulty, for the surf was not inconsiderable; but I had some compensation for this inconvenience in the admirable accommodation which I at once procured at a moderate price, and in an excellent situation.

Devil's Island, although at first the visitor might have doubts on the subject, is indisputably an island, for it is severed from the main land first by a very narrow channel of seawater, then by a large open inlet connected with the former; and finally by a long channel, which the inexperienced might take for a canal, but those possessed of a more practical knowledge of the world believe to be a breeding-place specially designed for musk-rats, for, judging by the number of excavations on either of its banks, it would be no great stretch of imagination if we were induced to conclude that these highly-interesting and most amusing "little cusses," as Artemus Ward designated his kangaroos, had assembled here from every

portion of the state. If in this I should be wrong, all I can say is that the localities frequented by these animals are to be pitied, for even the labour of a Lesseps would not be worth a month's purchase where these burrowing little nuisances had become so numerous.

Over the first-named channel of sea-water has been built a bridge, which connects Devil's Island with Dame's Quarter—a long, low peninsula, so slightly joined to the main land that it is almost an island. The name is certainly peculiar, and as such it struck me. I made inquiries, therefore, from such sources as I thought might possibly be in a condition to give me the desired information regarding the cause of its origin. The richest man on the island I selected first as probably the most likely to be able to furnish me with the information I wished to learn; but in this supposition I was entirely in error, for having devoted his whole life to money-making, he was as narrow in views and as ignorant of all that had occurred previous to the dates within his own recollection, as any of our beadles, or other pompous

dignitaries—I mean those of a few years ago. Of late years there has been an improvement in this class, particularly in the country.

After inquiring of this rich man, who was also an exalted personage in the Methodist Church, I consulted the captain of a pongey, who, report said, owned six or seven vessels besides the one he commanded. This I will say of him, whatever he did or did not own, he was “parient” to a very saucy little clipper, in the shape of a black-eyed, well-built, taut-rigged daughter. However, I’m casting a-head. Our friend, the skipper, said, “The name was given afore his time, and as he was not answerable for his forefathers, he didn’t care a damn what they did.” It soon became evident to me that I was among a race of people who, however primitive and honest, were sadly deficient in desire for antiquarian research. In fact, they were like the man who, being asked to subscribe to a building that would be valued by posterity, responded, “Hang posterity!—what has posterity done for me?”

I have often weighed the matter, but really

have imbibed sufficient whisky to disturb the it is one on which it is difficult to come to a conclusion. We will therefore leave it an open question, whether, being unsuccessful in obtaining the information we desire on a definite subject, we should not then and there drop research. I was younger then than I am now, and consequently less experienced in the world ; still, for the sake of those who might be interested in Dame's Quarter when they heard of it, I continued my inquiries.

There was on Devil's Island a toothless, bleary-eyed old man, who suffered from numerous ailments in consequence, he said, of exposure to the weather ; though, if the statements of his boon-companions deserved credence, I should rather say that his maladies were caused by a super-abundance of chewing tobacco, and the incalculable quantity of bad corn-whisky which he consumed. From him I determined to try to obtain the wished-for information, but for reasons best known to myself, I resolved to postpone my examination of him to an early hour on a future occasion. At length I met him at a very early hour, when I thought it impossible he could

equilibrium of his intellect. I therefore requested of him an elucidation of what had so greatly excited my curiosity. With a hiccup, a stagger, and a lurch to windward, he responded that men were a deal more practical in old times than now; and that if a woman didn't do her husband's bidding, she was sent for a week to Dame's Quarter, where she was kept on bread and water. "I wish," continued the old reprobate, "the old laws still existed—I do—that's a fact." And he took a tack to windward, and put his carcass through the snake-fence.

While I was dragging my antiquated friend out of his horizontal position, and vainly endeavouring to restore him to the perpendicular, I could not help thinking that a Dame's Quarter would not be unacceptable in the vicinity of many an English home.

All the water that flows and ebbs between Dame's Quarter, the adjoining marsh to its right, and Devil's Island, had been frozen up so firmly that it could be crossed at any place on foot; but at length the thaw came, and as the ice began to give way, the splashes and puddles that opened were soon covered with wild-fowl.

These birds, however, were unapproachable, for if an advance was made on them over the open, they took flight long before you came within shooting distance; and no channel by which a boat could pass was as yet opened. So the wild-fowl, as far as I was concerned, fattened and thrived upon the open pools.

At the same time, although tied in action for the present, I determined, when circumstances should alter, that I would be prepared to avail myself of them.

Any kind of calculation respecting next day's weather is always uncertain work. It is so anywhere, particularly in England—worse in Scotland and Ireland; and very dubious even in this part of America, more especially at the season when Winter is breaking up. So there is nothing for it but to wait patiently until the navigation round Devil's Island is reported practicable. When I appeared at breakfast one morning, my host informed me that I might now succeed in going round the island; and that he would accompany me. But we found we were too early, and postponed the excursion *sine die*.

There is a most amusing little character living in the house with us—the son of a Jewish tailor in Baltimore, who has banished his youthful progeny to this place on account of his daring to fall in love with some girl that his paterfamilias did not approve of. This youngster is not idle, for with the trading instincts of his race, he has built a store hard-by, and does a flourishing trade in slop-clothing with the oystermen. His own get-up is truly wonderful—the gaudiest colours alone pleasing his eye; while his personal adornment is capped with a rich display of jewelry—a sight to behold! He is a regular lady-killer; and is extremely dreaded by the youth of the island as a rival. He has got into trouble several times on this score; but he only laughs at it, and producing his revolver, tells you he can shoot as straight as any of them. He is certain to come to grief some day, for I never yet knew a man in this country fond of resorting to the use of fire-arms, who did not in the end perish by them. This I told him, but the little dare-devil only laughed at my caution.

He is a good-hearted little fellow, and I should

be sorry to hear of his coming to grief. His store is a most attractive place to the young ladies of Devil's Island and the Dame's Quarter, whether they be black or white ; and a white man, if he behaves himself, is, as the saying goes, as good as a nigger now-a-days.

I often availed myself of the privilege of this young Israelite's acquaintance, to visit his place of business, and get introduced to the wealth and fashion of the locality. There are some very pretty girls here, but they all want re-rigging from truck to keilson ; particular attention being required to their shoe and stocking departments.

An Englishman possessed of sufficient means to live without labour is an object of great curiosity in the ultra-rural parts of America. If not called here, as on the Continent, a *Milord Anglais*, he is supposed to be something of the kind, wandering about incognito, either to escape punishment for some political misdemeanour, or to find out a safe and profitable investment for his immense resources. Numbers of persons, some from miles distant, have

called, not professedly to see me, but doubtless with that hope. Their manner on such occasions was highly amusing.

"I have just come in to light a pipe, or hear that all were well," if I chanced to be in the way some one would remark. "Got strangers? Guess I won't intrude. Didn't know it, or wouldn't have come, on no account."

Still they did not go. These people, however, have none of the prying curiosity of the Yankees, who, by-the-by, are far from bad fellows, if you know how to take them. I invariably made a point of seeing such strangers when they came, going, as it were, unintentionally into their society, and treating them as if we had met fifty times before; and this affability of manner in a few minutes made them and myself the best friends imaginable. With Americans one ought always to be courteous, never on any account assuming airs of superiority. If treated as equals they will never be found, in ordinary intercourse, whatever their class, anything but polite.

I am beginning to like the people here very

much. As for my host and his wife, they are as good and kind a couple as it has ever been my luck to meet. Nothing I ask of them is considered too much trouble, and their desire evidently is to gratify me. Should I use the horse, conveyance, or servants, and even take them from their work, no extra charge is made for their services. Nothing of the Margate lodging-house keeper principle exists here; may it long continue to be so, for it is a comfort to know that, at this advanced age of the world, there is a retreat where the people are not solely intent on pillaging their visitors.

The back of our residence looks over the broad expanse of channel between Devil's Island and Hooper's Straits; and so close are we to the water that, when the tide is full, and the winds are high, blowing from the south or south-west, the spray flies all over the building. In front, after passing one or two enclosures, each of which contains about an acre of ground, with a cottage in the centre, we come to the public highway, which runs from one end of the island to the other. After crossing this road, a marsh

stretches away for miles, its limits being lost in the distance. During the severe weather, when the country was ice-bound in all directions, it was an easy enough matter to traverse this waste; but at that time there was no reward to be derived from such a tramp, as all the birds that inhabited it had departed for more genial climes. Now, however, that a thaw has set in, and walking over this treacherous savannah becomes a matter of difficulty, if not a dangerous undertaking, numerous feathered residents have returned to its friendly shelter, and I have resolved, provided it is practicable, to make the attempt to obtain some new specimens, or at least gain a little more practical knowledge of ornithology,

The first bird that I killed was a kildee plover, which was impudent enough to trot alongside the road in front of me. I particularly wanted to note some of his peculiarities, or I should not have attempted to bring him down; for, leaving out my detestation of the destruction of animal life that cannot be utilized as human food, I have a great deal of love for this charming little

wader, which I have met in all parts of America, whether on the broad, swelling prairie, the densely cultivated woodlands, or the almost boundless savannahs.

I can remember, as if it were yesterday, the first time I heard its plaintive and appealing note, a note which, when once heard, is as deeply impressed upon the memory of the lover of nature as are the features of his first love. It was a stormy night, yet the cold wind, which earlier in the day had blown itself to rest, commenced again to freshen, and now and then reminded us dwellers upon earth of its power, by the fitful gusts that occasionally burst unrestrained over the landscape. The season was early Spring, and through the breaks in the clouds, although it was near the hour for the sun to go to rest, the blue sky could be seen, but that only momentarily, for the driving scud rapidly obscured it, and altogether prevented a lengthened enjoyment of so acceptable a sight. At the time I speak of I resided in the western part of the State of New York. This was then a new country, and I was young, full of youth-

ful anticipations and buoyancy of spirits, although a run-away from home. My fault was not that I loved man less, but nature more; so here I was, admiring the handiwork of the great Creator—living but for the moment, perfectly regardless of the future.

Floating on the wings of the wind, I heard a plaintive note wafted past me. As it sounded to me, it plainly said "kill-dear." Although the enunciation was distinct, I should have imagined myself mistaken, but again and again I heard it repeated. But where was the producer of these plaintive notes? I gazed in every direction, with the hope of discovering him, but without success. Again the sound was repeated, and came, apparently, from aloft, high over the spot on which I stood. In an instant I gazed fixedly upwards, long and steadily studying the face of the sky; but all I discovered was a small bird hovering over me, as if uncertain where to rest its wearied pinions. But night was rapidly approaching, and my inclinations whispered to me that it was time to seek my lodgings; for though the gale had fallen, and the

rains for the time had ceased, still angry and ominous clouds, indicative of protracted bad weather, rose to windward. I was about to go, when the note "kill-dear" again struck my ear, and as I was anxious to see the bird which produced the strange sound, I lingered a little longer, and gazed into that part of the firmament from which I supposed the melancholy but melodious notes had come. My straining vision was again rewarded with the sight of a small bird, hovering so far aloft as to be scarcely distinguishable; but, as I gazed, it ceased its hovering flight, and closing its wings, descended to the ground like a bullet from a catapult. I marked well the spot where it lighted, and in a moment my gun covered it, and, in return for my accuracy of aim, I picked up a small bird, evidently belonging to the plover genus, though heretofore unknown to me. Glad at having obtained a new specimen, yet ashamed of having taken the life of apparently so harmless a creature, I carried it home, and it was soon produced, with the contents of the bag. Host, hostess, and all their numerous progeny, hailed

my poor little victim's appearance with delight, and welcomed it with such terms of endearment as "the dear!" "the darling!" "the pet kildee!" and then I knew what I had deprived of life. In after-years I often saw them on the prairies, but never without recalling that boyish scene when life was young, and its trials unknown.

The next specimen of animal life I met with in this day's wandering was a blue bird, azure on the back as the Summer waves of the sun-lit Mediterranean, refulgent over the breast as the western horizon at the hour of sunset. I know this darling sufficiently well to pass him by unmolested, and to do so gave me pleasure; but, stranger, if you have never crossed the broad Atlantic, never seen the grand, illimitable western world, you know not this little beauty, that justly rivals, in the estimation of the people of the New Continent, our own sweet-voiced, trusting robin.

A German once said to me, as we both gazed with admiration at a blue-bird, "If angels ever come to earth, and assume the guise of mundane creatures, I know of no form, if I were one, that

I would sooner assume than that of a blue-bird !” Long since this dear, dear friend of my youth has gone to his long account ; he was too good for this world, and “whom the Lord loveth he taketh early !” Can he have assumed, after his demise, the guise of the blue-bird ? His speech has never been forgotten, and I have never killed a blue-bird since.

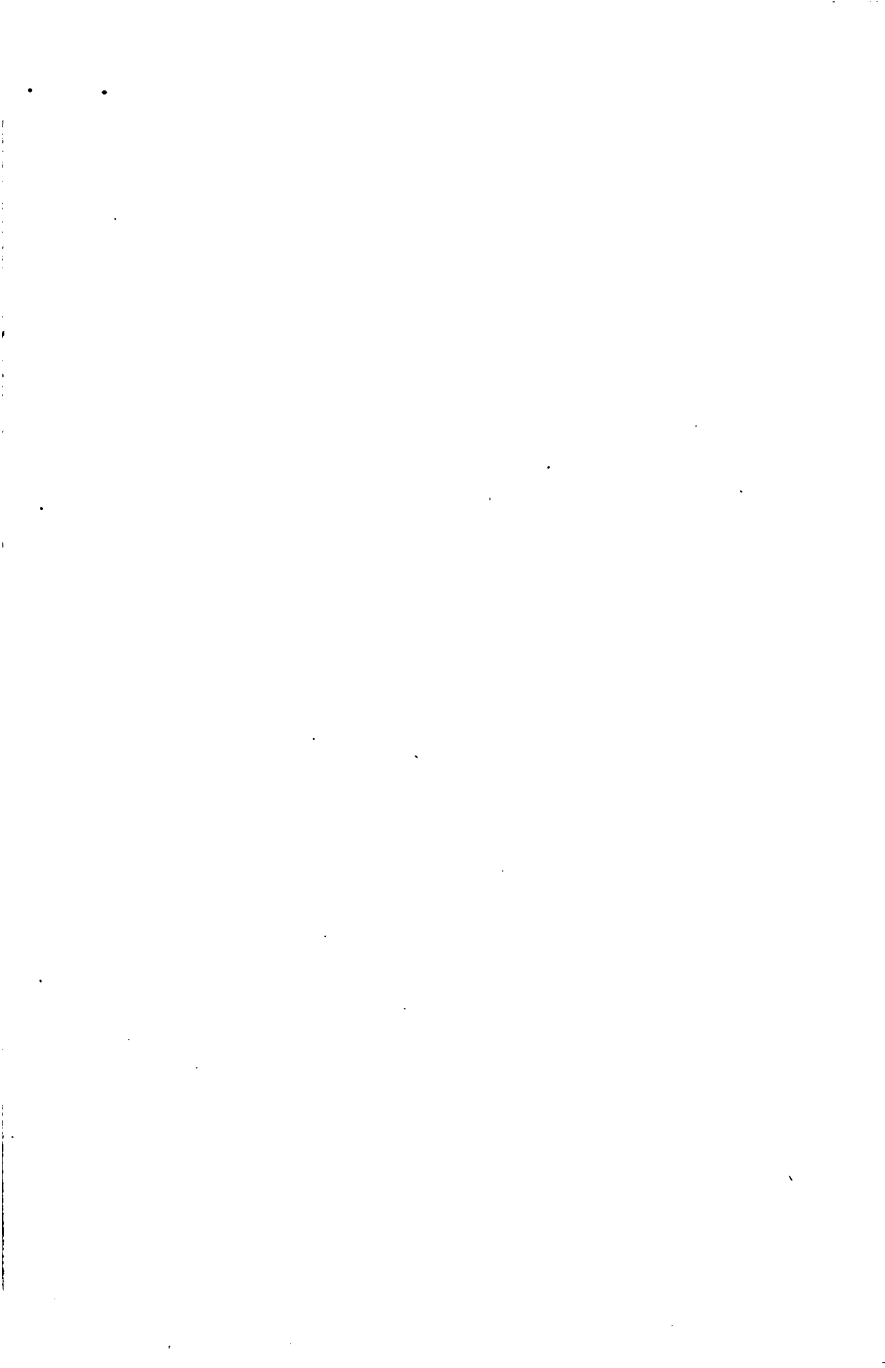
Leaving this little warbler carolling forth his sweet notes, either inviting a mate to join him, or foretelling the near approach of Spring, I had not advanced above a couple of hundred yards across the wet savannah, before I flushed a couple of American meadow-larks. Yesterday, possibly, they were in the Carolinas ; now they are here—tired I know them to be, for, even after being disturbed, they rest where they have lighted, although I am within ten or twelve paces of them. Pretty as they are, with their nut-coloured backs and golden-yellow bosoms, they are equally useful, for the amount of slugs and insects which they destroy in the larva state is something astonishing. Being scattered all over the United States, I can halt and listen to

their shrill whistle, or gaze with surprise on their rapid, eccentric, jerking movements, without blood-thirsty intentions, although, for the table, few better birds can be found. But this is only a specimen of the inconsistency of man. The grating voice of a snipe, resembling, as far as I can express it, the word sk-a-p-e greets my ear, and in a moment my gun comes to my shoulder, and so true is my aim that, ere the long-billed stranger has traversed twenty yards from where he has sprung, he is hurled to mother earth, wounded unto death. The meadow-lark was as good in every respect as the snipe for human food, and had the advantage of being larger, but it was an easy object to shoot, and therefore was spared, while the more difficult shot, that which required me to call into play my greatest skill, was ruthlessly slain. Again and again snipe thrust themselves before me, and some I missed, though I killed the majority, bagging, in a couple of hours, as many as I desired.

But I have got into a labyrinth, which far exceeds that at Hampton Court. In front of

me was a creek too wide to jump over, and which was so soft on the edges and at the bottom, that it was impossible to wade across it. I therefore pursued my way up its course, but my progress was soon interrupted by an offshoot, quite as large as that into which it branched. In hope of finding a narrow portion, I followed its winding course, but was soon opposed by a similar tributary—over which I managed to get by the skin of my teeth. Soon afterwards, however, I found myself so enclosed that it was out of my power to go forward; and to regain my starting-point would have been a matter of no small difficulty, so I retraced my steps, and in doing so I bagged a couple of black ducks. Their additional weight, increasing the difficulty of walking, tired me immensely; but I persevered, stuck to my load, and after resting innumerable times, often almost despairing of regaining the point from which I started, I ultimately found myself once more back upon the road, thankful that I had reached it, yet cross with myself for not having accomplished my task sooner. I have travelled

through Irish and Scotch bogs, through African lagoons, the cane-brakes of the Southern States, and Chinese mangrove swamps, but never previously had I got into such a perfect *cul-de-sac* as the marsh that lay in front of my residence at Devil's Island.



CHAPTER XV.

TANGIER SOUND—OYSTERS—DREDGING AND TONGING—THE
AMERICAN OYSTER-TRADE—CHESAPEAKE BAY—WHY THE
CULTURE OF SHELL-FISH IS MORE SUCCESSFUL IN AMERICA
THAN IN ENGLAND—FATTENING GROUNDS—NECESSITY OF
FRESH WATER—OYSTER POLICE FORCE—LIFE OF AN
OYSTER-FISHER—A 'BONNE BOUCHE'—A WILD AND RECK-
LESS LOT—FOREIGNERS.



CHAPTER XV.

IF the water were drawn off, and the bottom of Tangier Sound exposed, it would, in my belief, be found to be carpeted with oysters—in fact, it would be discovered to be so densely packed with them that it would be impossible to walk over its surface without placing the foot at each stride upon a bivalve. If this space were limited, and confined only to a few acres, or possibly several square miles, and situated in English waters, its value would be beyond calculation; but when I state that Tangier Sound contains an area of upwards of a hundred square miles, with inlets, bays, and creeks almost as extensive, it is not surprising

when I state that oysters are worth per bushel one-fourth what a dozen can be obtained for at Scott's, in the Haymarket.

I am aware that there is a very general impression that American oysters are not equal to those of our home production, though for my part I believe that the truth is the reverse; for if asked to choose which I would sooner eat, I should certainly select the transatlantic. The abundance of this valuable shell-fish in Tangier Sound is almost equal throughout the length and breadth of the Chesapeake Bay; and as they are in immense demand throughout the United States, their fishery employs many thousands of people and hundreds of craft. They are procured either by dredging, or tonging, all waters being open to the use of the latter implement, while the employment of the former is permitted only in deep channels or exposed thoroughfares. The dredge which is used in these parts is generally much larger and more cumbersome than that employed in English waters; while the tong is an implement almost unknown to us. It resembles two gar-

den-rakes, working upon a pivot, with the teeth turned towards each other, each rake-head having a handle eighteen or twenty feet in length.

In a calm day an experienced tonger will find little difficulty in gathering four or five bushels of oysters; and those procured in this way invariably fetch a much higher price in the market than those that are taken by dredging. The reason of this is obvious. The dredge breaks and bruises its contents, as it is dragged along the rough bottom; while with the tong they are lifted carefully from the ground, and placed, without injury, in the boat.

Having studied the matter carefully, I have no hesitation in saying that there are few things more susceptible of injury than oysters. Experiments which I have made in reference to them have proved that with care and attention oysters can be kept alive for months after they have been taken from the water; but to succeed in doing this, care must be taken that they are not thrown about, and that the temperature of the apartment in which they are stored does

not fall below freezing point, or rise above sixty degrees above Fahrenheit.

Great interest has been taken for the last few years by the British public in oyster culture, resulting from the increase in their value, which has almost made them a prohibited luxury to those of limited incomes. If we are to continue to depend upon our home supplies, I have little doubt but that the price now charged for these delicacies will in ten years be doubled. So if oysters are to be brought within the means of all, the commodity must be obtained from abroad, for I am confident that our coast is not suited for their re-production in large quantities. So much has lately been written and said in reference to this matter, that I determined to become thoroughly conversant with the American oyster-trade, and discover, if possible, the reason why they were so much more abundant and so much more easily re-produced on the western shores of the Atlantic than with us; and the result has been that I have learned the solution of what has long been a mystery.

The Chesapeake Bay produces more of these

bivalves than any similar extent upon the American coast, and here they are re-produced and obtain maturity earlier than elsewhere. Banks and inlets that have been dredged until not a single oyster remained upon them, after two years' rest have been found to be stocked abundantly. Now with us it is currently believed that it takes three years for an oyster to mature; while, if a bed was entirely deprived of breeders, twenty years would not float on to it sufficient spat to thoroughly re-stock it. The reason for the earlier maturing of the foreign shell-fish is, in Summer the land-locked waters in which they are found experience a higher degree of heat than the open bays and estuaries of our coast, and there being, comparatively speaking, no tide in the great bay of Virginia and Maryland, the oysters enjoy thorough quiet, and the spat, when produced, is not floated off seaward, or thrown upon the beach, but permitted to settle within a short distance of where it was produced.

Doubtless the mouths of many of our rivers are admirably suited to fattening oysters; but

there are very few of them that do not suffer from a fall or rise of from eighteen or twenty feet in each tide which passes over them, running with a force of three or four knots an hour—thus submitting the shell-fish in each tide to two strong-marked changes of temperature, and carrying either landward or seaward the helpless spat, until it is either destroyed by being washed ashore, or has attached itself to some rock or culch many miles from its birth-place.

Chesapeake Bay is over two hundred miles long, and forty or fifty miles wide—almost as large in area as Scotland; but its conflux with the Atlantic Ocean between Capes Charles and Henry does not exceed a mile across. The result is that the average tides do not exceed in their rise and fall twelve or fourteen inches, while the current produced from them is almost imperceptible, a breeding-place being thus formed by nature which has but to be made artificially in the same latitude will produce similar results.

The oysters dredged in the main bay do not

generally go direct to market, but are taken to some well-known breeding-ground, where they are laid upon beds to fatten. The fattening-grounds, as they are called, are invariably near the mouth of a river, for a moderate supply of fresh water is necessary for this purpose. A well-known person in Eastern Maryland, who had been engaged in the oyster trade all his life, and had realized a fortune by it, informed me, as a curious proof of the fact that fresh water is the great fattener of oysters—that some years ago there was a very wet Summer, and that the oysters gathered in the succeeding Autumn were as firm and fat as if they had been for months on a fattening-bed.

It must not be supposed that the States of Maryland and Virginia are not aware of the value and importance of these fisheries, for such would be a great mistake. The respective Legislatures have made laws for the protection of this natural product—have divided the year into an open and close season, and founded an oyster police force to see that no violations of the regulations take place. Where dredging

is permitted one season, it is tabooed the next, and the fishermen of one state or county are not permitted to trespass upon the waters of another. Before the existence of the police force, many terrible fights took place between crews from different parts of the bay, when blood was spilt in abundance, and generally several lives were sacrificed. But such scenes may happily now be reckoned among the things that have been; and many an orphan and widow was pointed out to me that became so through these feuds. When the police force was first established, the opposition these wild fishermen showed was so serious that it remained some time doubtful whether they would be able to perform their duties. However courage, decision, and impartiality gained the day, but not before several struggles with the law-breakers had taken place. At this date it is only the most turbulent and disreputable among these brave and hardy fishermen that do not approve of the police force, and of the laws enacted to prevent the annihilation of the product by which they live.

The life of an oyster-fisherman is hard and trying, yet attractive. The season lasts a little over six months, and in that time they must make sufficient on which to live during the remainder of the year. During the fishing-season, there are a great number of days when they cannot follow their avocation—such as when it blows too hard, or when there is no wind at all; or when the bay gets closed with ice. Although none ever work on Sunday, the law here strictly forbidding it, and although during the open season the dredgers do not average three days a week, yet on each of these days each man will make, with moderate luck, two or three pounds sterling. But like those of many other callings, they never lay anything by for a rainy day, but gamble, or otherwise squander their easily-gained wealth.

If this were England, and its inhabitants acted as they do now, they would all starve to death in the Summer. Here it is true they may get hard-up for tea, coffee, sugar, and such commodities as require to be bought, but as for the necessaries of life—such as fuel, fish,

flesh—they can always be obtained by the seeker, for the beach yields abundant drift-wood ; the bay more fish than they can possibly want ; and he would be a stingy neighbour indeed who would not share sheep, calf, or pig with an acquaintance.

Then anyone, even in the close season, can take his tongs, and gather as many oysters as he pleases for home consumption ; and I say, most emphatically, there is no food in the world less cloying, and which sticks better to your ribs. If the reader ever has the opportunity, let him remember this counsel, and act upon it. Light a fire out of sea-wreck, gather about two dozen of the largest oysters he can find, and place them in the hot smouldering ashes, cup side down. When the shell-fish has been sufficiently long there to open, and look a trifle browner than when in its natural state, it is cooked. Be careful how you take it out of the fire, for the shell will burn, and the juice will scald. *Experientia docet*—a few essays will teach all this. Well, having cut the mustle that binds the shells together with your hunting-knife,

and, mark this, not condemning my advice till you have tried it, just place a wee pinch (about the size of a pinch of salt) of gunpowder over it, and if we agree in what pleases our palates, you will say with me that it is a *bonne bouche*.

I have often eaten oysters here three times a day, and certainly every day in the week, cooked or raw, and I never failed to enjoy them. If I have a weakness, it is for a well-fed Chesapeake oyster, without placing any restriction on its size. If the reader should get to Baltimore, let him go to Ballard's Restaurant, say I sent him' and ask for a Cherry-stone creek oyster—never mind the magnitude, as in this instance it does not denote quality; nay, shut your eyes if you will, and let the burly nigger who stands behind the counter, knife in hand, to obey your orders, place it in your mouth, forget home prejudices, think not of the differences between Republics and Monarchies, but make up your mind to be an impartial judge, and if you do not pronounce it to be delicious, well, I am wrong, and my palate is not constructed after the manner of Englishmen's; or, it may be, Turkish cabobs,

Indian pillaws, and Chinese curries, leaving out Maryland terrapins and New York baked clams, have made me a little more common in my tastes, and a little less nice in my selection of dainties.

In Maryland, on the eastern shore, it is impossible for a man to starve, unless he does so through choice, for abundant and good food is to be obtained for the trouble of taking it.

As I have said, the oystermen are a wild and reckless lot, but good-hearted and hospitable to an extreme. When with them, travel in their ways, and meet them in their manner, but do not, for goodness sake, stroke the cat the wrong way, for if you are supposed to court a quarrel, you will have any number willing to humour your fancy.

Few here go about unarmed; and they have a playful manner of showing their weapons, and handle them in such a careless way as is rather startling to foreigners. You must get used to this; though it is a little disagreeable at first.

Among the population here there are a good

many foreigners, who generally make a couple of voyages to the West Indies during the Summer, and "oyster" in the Winter; but they are all well-mannered, if you will only let them see that you are a believer in Robert Burns's line,

"A man's a man for a' that."

The sale of intoxicating liquors on Devil's Island is strictly forbidden—a prohibition which has led to much benefit, for if it were otherwise, there is no saying what dreadful things might occur among a population so reckless, if under the influence of drink.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

